ETHICS AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND LEGAL PHILOSOPHY

Volume LXIV JANUARY 1954 *Number 2, Part II*

POLITICAL DECISIONS IN MODERN SOCIETY*

KURT RIEZLER

I

THE issues to be examined may be indicated by a specification of the sense in which I use the term "political decision." Any action that can be said to have direct or indirect political consequences, intended or not, may be called political. From this large area I wish to select a small part, the actions of a power-holder, ruling a political community, in his own name, title, interest, or acting for a ruling class, in trust for God, the people at large, for the nation.

Such a power-holder, individual or collective, makes numerous decisions and is engaged in many actions of all kinds which, strictly speaking, are not political. Among such actions, moreover, I wish to concentrate attention only on those which in the fullest sense are "political" and in the strongest sense "decisions." Most activities of a modern government are administrative. Though in their totality all these actions together make up the policy of the government, most of the single acts, taken separately, are only of partial impact and limited relevance; they do not commit totally the actor and the community for which he acts. Most of them can be undone, revised, corrected; moreover, they decide the question to which they refer only preliminarily and for the time being. They are political actions only indirectly and not in the full sense in which I use the term.

Political action is total action. It is total in so far as it commits the actor and the community, group, society for which he acts. Even the tyrant is and acts as a social being for others, whether they like it or not. Total action decides something. The decision, when acted upon, cannot be taken back. The deed, once done, cannot be undone. It is out of the hand of the doer; the ball rolls and follows its own course. The doer can watch this course, try to correct it by other actions and protect himself and his people against some of its consequences. The decision of the North Koreans to attack South Korea, of the American Government to help South Korea resist the attack, have been such decisions. These decisions were political actions in the full sense in which I use the term.

What does that mean? Why is this sense the full sense? Because it involves the historical situation in its entirety and through the historical situation the

* Delivered as public lectures under the Charles R. Walgreen Foundation for the Study of American Institutions, University of Chicago, February, 1953.

human situation—something that the newest philosophy would probably call existence and what Michel de Montaigne more modestly called *l'entière condition humaine*. It does so because political action proper commits the actor, cannot be taken back, and exposes the actor to the consequences of his errors and to the play of the circumstances and their concatenations. It tests his power, his capacities, and his virtues, and makes manifest the interplay of the elements that constitute the life and the destiny of man as a finite being.

An ancient tradition comes down from the Greek and Latin way of history writing[1] and is still alive in Machiavelli. It is part of his philosophy of history, if he ever had one, and has nothing at all to do with his true or alleged immoralism. According to this tradition there are or are believed to be a number of fundamental elements constituting the situation of the political actor. Machiavelli calls them *necessità, fortuna,* and *virtù*. The Greek called them *ananke, tyche, arete*. Machiavelli sometimes adds a fourth element which he calls *occasione*—opportunity. The interrelation of these constituent elements describes the situation in which the acting man—by his own nature as a finite being—is confronted with the power of necessity which, though compelling him to act, limits his power of action, and with the play of chance in the sequences and concatenations of events which, given the limitations of his knowledge, he can never entirely discard. The way he deals with this situation is part of his political *virtù* as a statesman. He may recognize or fail to recognize the necessity, misjudge the situation, overestimate or underestimate his own potentialities or those of the political community for which he acts or pretends to act. He may have or have not the staying power to outlast the misfortune of an enterprise, have or not have an answer ready to a countermove of his opponents, be or not be wise and flexible enough to deal with unforeseen events and to follow up his actions by other actions, and so forth. The word *virtù* does not yet have our moral meaning. The mistake in judgment is here not a moral sin, though it may amount to a political crime, for which history, the most cruel of all judges, will punish the doer and his people, and for which the morally innocent as well as the doer must pay. This cruel judge sometimes disregards the moral sins but never forgives the political mistakes.

I do not need to refer to this tradition as a historical tradition. Mere common sense—prescientific common sense—would teach us to observe three or four elements which describe roughly the human situation in which actions occur and decisions are made. There are other equivalent formulations of this human situation, perhaps better or at least not worse than this one. We could say that political action of each and every acting ruler, be it an individual or a collectivity, occurs in a human context, which ties together the necessary, the possible, and the desirable; man cannot help looking at each one of these three under the aspect of the two others. Or we could say that man, from the beginning to the end of history, knowing and ignorant, stands and acts in between a must, a can, a want to, and an ought to, referring the one to the other in innumerable and variable tensions between what he must do, can do, desires to do, and ought to do—it does not matter which of these formulations one prefers. What matters is the unity of

the context of life that unites and refers to one another the elements of the situation, whatever the proper name of these elements may be.

I do not claim that any of these formulations of the human situation in general gets us very far. Insofar as rules of reasonable conduct can be expressed in the form of any of these formulas, common sense can discover these general rules without resorting to any theoretical tradition, though governments of all times, ancient and modern, can be shown to have violated even these general and simple rules of prudence to their own and their people's harm. Thus I recommend that our thinking start with the "full sense" of the words we use, i.e., with the context of the human situation in which political action occurs. This ancient tradition, or an equivalent of it in another equally human formula, forces us to keep in mind that in any such inquiry we are dealing with human life, with human beings, and not just with a more or less confused quantity of so-called objective facts, observed and verified as scientific data, isolated and stripped of their human meaning, role, or function in the life of men. This is a great advantage.

Political action, insofar as it is total action, brings into play all the elements of the human situation in which man as a finite being in between[2] some knowledge and much ignorance, in between *necessità, fortuna,* and *virtù,* or the necessary, the possible, and the desirable, aims at and strives for something, must act, can and cannot act, will and will not, ought to and ought not to, in a variegated sense of ought to, imaginary or real, moral or not. Man in political action is man in his totality —something that is, will become, or should become very interesting to us when our scientific mind finally discovers that man is not an aggregate of mechanisms of conditioned responses to a multitude of confused stimuli.

The historian talks about history as a series of *res gestae.* However, he cannot help discovering that all these *res gestae* are actions of human beings who are aiming at something, making mistakes and committing errors of many kinds. Thus every *res gesta* was first a *res gerenda* or *non gerenda;* and this origin belongs to the historical reality as well as the fact of the *res* that was actually *gesta*—the *res gerenda* or *non gerenda* is the background and accompanies silently the history of the *res gesta* which becomes real and human and concrete only with and against this background. This holds for all times, ancient and modern, and will hold for all future, as long as man is neither God nor a stone. One can check this by reading the work of a thoughtful historian, ancient or modern. Even the most objective, cool, and detached historian takes care that behind the actual *res gesta* he reports and their illogical concatenation, the *res gerenda* remain silently present, and with them the human errors, miscalculations, passions, and the whole foolishness of the human animal. One has only to read one of the more serious contemporary reports on World War II, like Chester Wilmot's *Struggle for Europe,* or even the less thorough reports of material witnesses or political amateurs like Harry Hopkins, and one cannot help thinking of the *res gerenda* behind the *res gestae,* even if these *res gerenda* did not reach the threshold of conscious reflection in the mind of the actor or the reporter.

This way of looking at history seems to be at odds with our most stubbornly held assumption about the order of

events in general. We think of this order as causally determined. By this we understand and should understand only that each phase of a closed system, i.e., a cross section in time, is completely determined by the preceding phase according to laws, which we call the laws of nature. These laws have a specific mathematical form; they are thought to be differential equations of the second order. This type of equation allows us to predict. As a universal proposition about reality, this order is not experience but a heuristic principle of inquiry and, as such, useful enough. The generalization as a statement about reality is an unwarranted anticipation of discoveries yet to be made, supported by some partial evidence and a lot of wishful thinking. The scientist, searching for laws of this type, usurps the throne of God, i.e., of an all-knowing divine observer outside the world—a position unknown and unknowable to man. The famous problem of determinism is God's problem, not man's. The actor and the historian, forced to think of reality in terms of the actor who acts or of an observer who himself belongs to the system observed, need not bother about this problem. No man who ever acted in history ever believed in a completely determined order of events—he knows that man's knowledge is limited—and to him things are what they are to man. The distinction is between outer and inner compulsion, not between causal determination and freedom. Moreover, he who usurps the throne of God outside the world should at least refrain from imposing on his observer-God this mathematical equation—God as a perfect mathematician is not confined within the limits of human mathematics. He knows, as well as the modern mathematician, of other systems of order and other ways of determination. It may even be that, if He wanted to understand foolish man and his queer history, He would step down to be human among humans and to feel as they are feeling—in action.

However, the Machiavellian formulation, and the ancient history writing from which it stems, seem to fit only his age and that of his ancient models but to be unsuitable for describing political action in our own time. They seem to presuppose political action as action of a powerful individual, or a small body of individuals like the governments of Venice, Florence, or ancient Rome, or the way of acting of a ruling prince whose actions are primarily his and intended to appear as his actions, visible to the world in which they are done. In him and in his fate, in his failure and in his success, all the elements of what I call the human context are visibly interlaced and refer to one another. It is doubtful whether this particular case or style of action can be used as a model for our own time, in which political action is no longer visible, indeed, is not intended to be visible as action of either individuals or small bodies. Perhaps the impression we get from Greek and Roman historians does not correspond entirely with the political reality even of their age but testifies first of all to a way of writing history, concentrating on and making visible the action and its fate in the acts and decisions of conspicuous individuals. If this is the case, the ancient formula would be at least partly an optical illusion created by a way of writing history, i.e., of the way of thinking of the age. I am not sure whether and to what extent this really is the actual case. Even in ancient times political decisions may have been nearer

some habits of our own time, at least on the average. Be this as it may—political decisions today are in most cases not clear cut decisions, openly and proudly arrived at and claimed by one man or a small group. Modern governments are strangely unwilling to make their decisions in this way—they seem to prefer splitting up their decisions in a series of small steps, none of which is decisive and final, hiding rather than openly proclaiming the part of the real doer. They are less proud of acting and deciding, and hence it is much more difficult for the modern historian to trace the history of a political action back to the actual initiator. Even when the legal responsibility of one man or one cabinet is clear and without doubt, it does not always coincide with the actual responsibility. The decisions themselves are much more technical, the circumstances and factors to be taken and actually taken into account are much more complex. A great many advisers, consultants, experts, official agencies, and unofficial friends are asked for their opinions and play their part in the decision actually made without either becoming known or sharing in the legal responsibility of the man or the cabinet in power. It cannot be demanded that he who makes the final decision has all the technical knowledge required. He has or can have many excuses. Each technical agency involved and every consultant, friend, or adviser, in case he is an expert in some special field, give their opinion and can claim to be heard; yet each one, being a specialist, usually looks at the matter from his own angle, and yet with more or less authority, since the actual doer can have no knowledge and judgment of his own in all these technically complex questions. The expert is on the average inclined to see only his own side of the question and to fight for it with some passion, though it is still up to the leading man or group of men to look at the impact of all of these sides on the total question, to appraise the relevance of every and each factor and of the many conflicting views. Hence the not infrequent impression given the observer that modern political action seems to be pursuing conflicting aims simultaneously, and counteracting with the one hand what the other hand is doing. Modern government seems to prefer sliding into a war or allowing a situation to come to be in which war becomes inevitable, neither the one nor the other side being able to retreat from a position already taken without a loss of face unbearable to the men in power. Sometimes, but not always, a change in policy or the correction of a former misjudgment of the situation can be concealed behind an identity of guiding principles expressed in vague words. There are, of course, a great many variations, depending on the kind of government or even on the different personalities of the members of a government, that make such generalizations about the modern way of acting difficult, if not impossible. All such general statements are dubious.

We hear frequently from modern statesmen the excuse, "I did not have any choice—there was no alternative." Only the predecessor is said to have had a choice. The present ruler had none. The trouble is that no one can ever disprove such a statement since we cannot, as in natural science, make an experiment, restore the original situation, change a factor, and see what happens. In some cases the impasse in which

there is no choice is of the statesman's own making.

But I shall not insist even on these generalizations. It does not matter whether and to what extent these cases are not predominantly modern. For example, Edmund Burke, speaking in Parliament on American taxation, cites the inconsistency of British governmental action before the Boston Tea Party. Remember this was before the industrial age and the paraphernalia of mass communication. "Never have the servants of the State looked at the whole of your complicated interests in one connected view. They have taken things by bits and scraps, some at one time and one pretense and some at another, just as they pressed without any sort of regard to their relations or dependencies. They never had any kind of system, right or wrong, but only invented occasionally some miserable tale for the day, in order meanly to sneak out of difficulties in which they had proudly strutted. And they were put to all these shifts and devices, full of meanness and full of mischief in order to pilfer piecemeal a repeal of an act which they had not the generous courage, when they found and felt their error, honourably and fairly to disclaim."[3]

This eloquent passage fits many a government outside England and in more recent times. Since the statesman tends to be reluctant to admit his deeds until they can be shown to have been successful, he is inclined to split them up into a multitude of apparently innocuous steps and to present his major decisions as unavoidable and as imposed upon him by circumstances and thus to exclude at least the appearance of any gamble.

Yet time and again there is a situation in which the statesman cannot help committing himself and his people in a clear cut decision, which is visibly a total decision and ties together the elements of necessity, chance, and virtue, i.e., his knowledge and his ignorance—a decision for which the actual ruler or his cabinet is visibly responsible. I exclude here the special genius of leaders like Hitler who, drunk with vanity and pride, claim the exclusive authorship of all their actions, think of themselves as divinely inspired, and identify themselves with the nation in whose name they claim to act. There always are, however, decisions that cannot be taken back—like the releasing of the atomic bomb upon the Japanese mainland—decisions whose outcome and consequences are uncertain. There is no way of avoiding or getting around such decisions. They cannot be split up into many minor and apparently innocuous steps. They are bound to become known; they must be made, though they can be postponed for a while. War is full of such decisions, though they are mostly very complex and wrapped in many technicalities of logistic supply, uncertain countermoves of the enemy, and the information or lack of it about them. They seem to be military decisions—in some cases they are political decisions as well, though made by military leaders.

Let us ask how an outstanding historian of ancient times like Thucydides would have dealt with the situation in which the decision to use the atomic bomb was made. He would probably have described a real or imaginary meeting of the president with his chief advisers, in which the possible ways of action with their reasons for and against were discussed by different personalities with different opinions and sentiments.

If he could not gather sufficient information about a real meeting of this kind, he would have taken care that each of the different speeches and arguments put forth in this meeting would represent the character or personality of the speaker and a possible way of acting and of looking at the questions, and all the speeches together would describe the dynamic situation in which the action would occur and have its partly-unknown consequences. He would not mind very much whether or not these speeches had been actually delivered; in case of lack of information Thucydides would be satisfied with speeches that, as he says, could or should have been made—as long as the speeches, though imaginary, were representative of each person and his way of thinking and acting and of the dynamic forces operating in the field. That is Thucydides' method, as he characterizes it himself. By this method he succeeded, in a way astonishing even for the modern reader of *The Peloponnesian War,* in producing a "work for all time." I would not advise a present-day historian to imitate his method. He would have to be a genius and to be as close to the actors of his own time as Thucydides was. His speeches are not only more eloquent but shorter, more precise, and more telling than all actual speeches usually held on such occasions. We can assume that his speeches on the release of the atomic bomb would show us the American leaders wavering between humane reluctance to use such a cruel weapon, which could wipe out the civilian population of an entire city, and pride in the invention of atomic power, in the production of the bomb, or in the effort that went into it—between some hesitation to use it as a weapon and the need of and the passion for efficiency and other conflicting sentiments. In this way he would illustrate the particular historical situation and through it the elements of the human situation.

Of course, this instance is a very particular one, and so is the American political scene. Thucydides would probably have had some difficulty in realizing that during such a meeting the main worry of the American President and his faithful advisers was doubtless not so much the efficiency of the bomb and whether it would have the expected effect on the Japanese and their leaders, but the reaction of the American people and the leaders of the Christian churches to the use of so cruel a weapon—contrary to the humane tradition of the American nation. I am told that this was actually the question in the back of the minds of the people concerned with this decision. The worry proved to be unnecessary. Pride, the psychological temper of total war, the disposition expressed in the two fateful words "all out," the admiration of "efficiency," overruled both the horror felt in the first moment and the ensuing uneasiness. The government had no great difficulty in defending the decision. It was not even necessary to do much engineering of consent. An age-old device, one of the oldest in the history of propaganda, though involving a fallacy, was used, and in good faith, since even a great number of those who used it probably did not suspect their argument. The defense put forth an either-or, an alternative presenting what the logicians call a total disjunction—either release the bomb or a million or half a million American boys must die in a military attack on the Japanese mainland. This is not an either-or of a total disjunc-

tion. If I am not grossly mistaken, the real alternative was either to release the bomb or to allow some conditions to modify the unconditionality of the surrender. Later some such modifications were granted, and anyway simple prudence demanded the acceptance of such conditions, as unconditional surrender did not make sense, at least not in the Japanese case. Only a few, however, questioned the reality of this either-or. The temper of this nation in total war accepted the alternative; the situation in which it appeared to be total was of our own making.

It may well be that the need for consent, the dependence on an elusive public opinion, is one of the natural and quite understandable reasons for the way modern political action differs from the style in which the statesmen of former times seem to have acted. Modern governments cannot help groping their way slowly and cautiously step by step, and at every step looking for possible consent. It is for this reason that they hide their major decisions, are reluctant to publicize them, and prefer splitting them up in a series of minor steps, probing for public reaction at each and any phase. The natural consequence of this way of acting is that modern governments seem to plan and to act and to think politically in short spans of time, being at any moment seemingly only concerned with a minor but immediate question at hand. A line of long-range policy may be formulated; yet it is formulated in rather vague and general terms that do not mean too much in concrete terms and are open to very different implementations. Hence the not infrequent impression of uncertainty and wavering—many minor or not so minor detours have to be made, concessions to this or that vocal group or political dissent, which seem to be unconnected with the long range policy line and yet, by committing the government, restrict the area of possible action. Looking at the policy of the great powers in the last fifty years, one cannot help discovering that in the majority of the cases they did not achieve what they were out to achieve. This puts the very difficult question, Why not? There are of course various reasons, one of which is the short range thinking imposed upon government or given as an excuse by the constant need for and the concessions to be made to popular consent—not a hereditary stupidity of governments.

In this introductory remark, I had no other aim than to suggest a way of thinking about political action that does not lose sight of the concrete actor and the human context with its inherent conflicts, within which action has been decided, is being decided, and will be decided until the end of time.

II

In most modern regimes, if they are not dictatorial, political action needs the consent of something we call "public opinion." In many cases the semblance of consent will do. Consent, real or apparent, can be "engineered." It is theoretically possible for the decision itself to be made without any thought of the difficulty or dubiousness of the consent to be engineered. Practically, and in most cases, the need for consent enters as a factor or a motivating force into the making of the decision itself—the decision or the line of action is adjusted to a real or apparent opinion or disposition to opinions already existing or imagined to exist, or to a potential

dissent that the party of an opposition or vocal minority groups could be able, ready, or inclined to engineer.

Public opinion is elusive. We are not even sure whether and in what sense of the word it really "exists." Even when it exists only in the imagination of the acting man and his advisers, it has power over the minds of men, and its power *is* its existence. One can put the question to three sorts of persons, whose profession compels them to know what it is. Their answers waver and differ. They do not really know. The man acting in government is in the best position to know. He, however, is frequently a fearful animal, living in constant anxiety of one public opinion or another, and thus he frequently errs. The men who make or believe they make it, the newspaperman and the propagandist, should know, but the former is inclined to identify public opinion with published opinion, and the latter is usually the first victim of his own propaganda—in order to be effective he must first persuade himself. For this we have overwhelming evidence, even in this country. There is a third sort of person: the scientist engaged in public opinion research. He is the least reliable of the three. The need for consent, and its engineering, is older than public opinion in our sense, older than the media of mass communication, older even than the press. I mention briefly two examples from bygone times to illustrate some human factors independent of present circumstances and institutions.

The first of my two examples I take from Homer, the wisest of all men. As I must be brief, I simplify this rather refined and sophisticated story. To get all the human wisdom it contains you have to read it yourselves. It is in the second song of the *Iliad*. Agamemnon, the supreme commander of the expeditionary forces of the united Greek princes and tribes, has quarreled with Achilles, the greatest hero in his army. Achilles, offended, withdraws from fighting.

Agamemnon, the mighty king—in Homer a rather mean human being, vain, arrogant, anxious of his dignity and his kingly share in the booty—would like nothing better than to conquer Troy without Achilles' help. His wishful thinking inspires a dream. In the dream he is ordered by Zeus to make an all out effort to conquer Troy in a new assault this very day. Like many kings before and after him, he is blind. He does not suspect Zeus's malicious intentions. He will be blind up to the very end, when, returning home, he steps in his kingly attire on the carpet laid out by his wife and her lover, who wait to murder him and his dignity in the bathtub. He is in a difficult position. His quarrel with Achilles is known; his personal interest in an attempt to conquer Troy without Achilles is too obvious. The cause of the war is a family affair, the elopement of his sister-in-law with a Trojan prince. The war aims, as we now say, are to get back the beautiful Helen and to restore the honor of his house. He does not want to be responsible for an attack that may fail. He cannot simply command the new attack. Yet he thinks he has a better idea. The first thing in the morning, he calls together his heroes, the semi-independent leaders of the united Greek tribes, reports his dream, propounds the procedure he intends to follow. The whole army should assemble in a general meeting—he

would submit the rank and file to a test of their fighting spirit or morale by asking them whether they would not prefer to sail home after so many fruitless years of fighting against an originally weaker enemy, disregarding the shame and dishonor that this would imply, the oracles and the apparent promises of the Gods having proved to be deceptive. In case the people do not show any fighting spirit, the princes and heroes themselves should mix with the multitude, and each one here and there should address this and that group or man, and restore their morale. The princes and heroes listen to his proposal—silently. Only Nestor, the elder statesman and wise man, whose advice, though always reasonable, frequently turns out not to be wise enough—such is history, even the wise man's wisdom fails—answers in a classical sentence, the model of the reaction of the subordinate, imitated by thousands of heroes in the times to come, though not always voiced openly. Here I translate literally: "If any other of the Greeks had told us the story of that dream, each one of us would have said that this is a lie; as *you* said it, however, you, who can claim to be the mightiest of all the Greeks, let us go and see how we can induce the people to take up arms." And thus they go; the people assemble, ordered by the many heralds, more a crowd than an army, a swarm of bees, some flying here, others there, in dense throngs; the earth shakes as the Greeks sit down. Finally the noise dies, Agamemnon stands up—holding his sceptre. A famous sceptre. It came to him from the God Hephaistos who had made it for Zeus. Zeus had given it to the founder of Agamemnon's house. It is the symbol of the divine origin of his authority. Now he addresses the General Assembly, tells them about the nine years of fruitless efforts, the many losses, and those which still would be suffered—and, of course, of the shame of a return without victory. He even appeals to their desires as private individuals, the wives, brides, and sweethearts awaiting their return, the children longing for their fathers—an appeal no modern leader, political or military, would dare to risk, and which in case of failure even the help of our modern heroes of the press could not correct.

To this appeal they respond. Passionately the meeting breaks up. They rush to the ships, calling to one another to untie the ropes; clouds of dust rise, men run and shout. The test to which Agamemnon puts the army proves to be a complete failure. This test atomizes the army into a multitude of individuals, each one longing to return home. Now the heroes have to begin their work. Odysseus, the most persuasive of them, takes away the famous sceptre from the helpless king and starts talking here and there to this and that group of men. The arguments he uses are the old and ever young ones. He appeals to emotions, shame, dishonor, greed, hope, and fear—fear of Agamemnon's double tongue: he may only test and yet afterwards punish the cowards. Thus he convinces the boys that it is not yet time "to go home."

The story needs no comment. In the narrow limits of a military example it contains all the elements of the political situation in which, in a bygone society, consent is needed and engineered. We have here the simple-minded leader, his desire for popularity, the few who have to handle the many, individual and collective emotions, the experts and their techniques.

Three hundred years later we find a

different political and social order, the first real democracy—Athens in the Peloponnesian War which Thucydides described. Thus I take my second example from a great historian. Decisions are made, consent is needed, potential dissent is ever present. It is a democracy of a kind unfamiliar to us. Government is not representative; there is not yet a press. The general assembly rules. It consists of all the citizens of Athens, twenty to thirty thousand, although all are not present at every meeting. The general assembly is not a legislative body. It is the executive. It hires and fires the leading men, even generals, admirals, and diplomats, calls them to account, punishes them, and sends them into exile. Each citizen is his own assemblyman; there is no bureaucracy worth the name; the citizens themselves are the civil servants, elected for a short period by vote or lot for this or that job. Thus the citizens rule one another in turn. All are soldiers; they are their own army and navy. Their success is an amazing story—hardly credible. They had conquered the great Persian kings and had done most to their defeat. After the war they went from success to success; they founded an empire from a growing alliance with other weaker, smaller cities, settlements, and islands that depended on them, paying the Athenians tribute and contributing contingents of soldiers and sailors. When the Peloponnesian War broke out, the Athenians were by far the most powerful city of the entire Mediterranean area. The war broke out because a majority of other communities envied their growing strength and feared with reason their dominance.

The bulk of the citizens were petit bourgeois, artisans, small businessmen, potters, tanners, carpenters, ship builders, traders, and so on. These small bourgeois, however, were skillful, ingenious, inventive, eager, and alert—experienced and gifted. Their vices—suspicion, greed, envy, restiveness—were the reverse of their virtues. There were no organized parties. What could engineering of consent mean under such circumstances? It meant persuading the general assembly by speech, argument, reason and appeal to popular emotions, personal charisma, and popular prestige. They were led into the war, deemed to be inevitable, by the greatest statesman of their times, Pericles, the founder or co-founder of their empire. He had been instrumental in enlarging and stabilizing the democratic regime and the domestic power of the "demos," the common man, the bulk of the people. He enjoyed an enormous prestige; he swayed the general assembly whenever he spoke. They reappointed him as their leader year after year; he led them in their military expeditions on land and sea and in their political neogtiations with allies and enemies. They recognized his superior wisdom and judgment and followed his general line of policy. He was the offspring of one of their oldest, noble families. He died a few years after the outbreak of the war, as a victim of the epidemic that befell Attica and which dealt it a blow more damaging than the yearly invasion of their country by the enemy.

Pericles is succeeded by a series of lesser men. The names change. The main policy of Pericles—no hazardous enterprise, reliance on naval superiority, calm judgment—is abandoned. While Pericles spoke the language of cool reason to the demos, his successors appeal to emotions of the moment:

radical revenge, unconditional surrender, punishment of all the citizens of a rebellious colony, Mitylene, not only of the aristocrats who instigated the rebellion, but of the democrats, too, who "did nothing to prevent" the rebellion—all males to be killed, females and children to be sold into slavery. The decision is taken and then reversed the next day, as another more reasonable speaker convinces the assembly that the measure does not make sense. The ship bringing the new order to the naval commander in charge arrives just in time, and instead of the entire male population of Mytilene only a thousand citizens of the rebellious party die. A close shave—a majority of only a few votes—such things go on and on. Slowly the manner of handling the general assembly deteriorates. Finally the assembly decides upon the Sicilian expedition—in which Athens loses its greatest fleet and the entire citizen army—doing just what Pericles had predicted would be fatal.

This fatal decision, however, is not due simply to a deterioration in the manner of handling the general assembly or to a transition from reason to emotion. The rather vulgar demagogues replacing Pericles are not responsible. Another deterioration goes parallel. The fateful decision of the Sicilian expedition is made on the advice of Pericles' nephew and ward, Alcibiades, a brilliant youth of limitless ambition, who was to be appointed a leader of the expedition. This is a new generation. He thinks of conquering Sicily and after Sicily, Carthage. Thucydides contrasts not simply Pericles and the lesser demagogues, but Pericles and Alcibiades, as well as Alcibiades and the conscientious and quite able co-leaders of the expedition, Nikias and Demosthenes. Alcibiades, the most resourceful and ingenious man of his time, thinks of nothing but his own individual ambition. The ideals of Pericles and his age mean nothing to him. Athens is to him but a mere instrument for his own rise to power and glory. The Greek city state does not develop an average civic virtue; it develops to the utmost the passions, ambitions, and capacities of conspicuous individuals and is enamoured of its own sons. Athens admires Alcibiades; in Plato's *Banquet* Socrates sets a monument to his charm, eloquence, to his grand ways, his freedom from any convention. It is this man, the idol of his city, whose advice the general assembly follows. He is involved, or suspected to be involved, in some sacrilegious mutilation of statues by drunken youngsters on a preceding night. His numerous enemies allow him to sail but succeed in having him called back, after the expedition has arrived in Sicily. Mistrusting his city and its justice, he does not obey but escapes to Sparta and indicates to the Spartans the decisive measures in their war against Athens. Thus the Athenians, after having started the war against Syracuse, made the second mistake of depriving themselves of the only man who could lead the expedition to a successful end.

But these words of mine, poor and few, cannot tell the whole story. You have to read Thucydides, his sober, intense narrative of the course of events, year after year. His tale is inexhaustibly rich; he does not teach or preach; he seems to report only the events and their course, the *res,* actually *gestae.* Yet thanks to his method, the *res gestae* stand against the background of the *res gerendae* and *non gerendae;* they are performed by human beings, grow-

ing out of their must, can, cannot, will and will not, should and should not, and this he achieves not by explicit statement but indirectly, by contrasting their ways of behavior, individual and collective—their passions, their demons, their real or apparent arguments by rather artful speeches of deliberation, persuasion, and information. They give the situation, the dynamic forces at work, representative, too, of the individual men and the collectivity for which the individual speaks and which he addresses. Thus he tells us an eternal story of man, his misery and glory, man "the maker of speeches and the doer of deeds," as Homer says, the only animal that can make a speech before he acts.

Both the Homeric heroes and the Athenian democracies are gone forever. Hence I jump over two and a half thousand years to a third example, nearer us, at the threshold of our own time, the years before World War I. Here I have no Homer and no Thucydides but can rely on my own experience of some years spent in the central governmental kitchen of Imperial Germany dealing with foreign policy and the press. My example concerns only the way in which the European great powers, in their need and desire for consent, handled the international press. Diplomacy was still secret or half-secret; a game played with some anxiety, yet cautiously and with traditional skill and relatively good manners. There were already industrial masses but no media of mass communication except the press. The international press was still a somewhat stratified society, with some big newspapers in each country having nationwide and some international prestige, reporting and commenting upon international policy—a kind of upper stratum—and a lot of other newspapers, provincial or yellow sheets, playing no or merely a minor role because of their local character, lack of prestige, judgment, and knowledge. The world was or was believed to be deep in peace. People in general did not think, and the few who talked of war did so in terms of the last two wars in Europe proper, of which the one—Bismarck's war against Austria—lasted three weeks, and the other—Bismarck's war against France—was actually decided in its seventh week. Nobody in the European governments had any idea what war between highly industrialized nations would mean, let alone any idea of "total war." There was some domestic unrest in most European powers. We can now hardly realize how little, since whatever unrest there was, was exaggerated after World War I, and the exaggeration was used to explain the outbreak of the war: the famous hindsight, the vice of historians. Some governments were worried, now the one, now the other. None of their worries and the reasons reached the public mind to shake the general confidence in peace. Seen from today this was a relatively happy period, and the European political scene was rather an idyllic one.

Though each big power was arming and watching the armament production of a possible opponent, none dreamed of overthrowing the government of another power, let alone changing its regime or undermining its social order. They maneuvered for small advantages in some colonial or imperialistic enterprises in those parts of the world that still were free—China, Turkey, parts of Africa—but without much passion and vital concern. "High politics" was

only the repercussion these movements could have on the constellation of the great powers and their "balance." The balance of power to which Europe owed its long period of peace, more than forty years, was a balance between five or six powers; as long as each of these powers, though wanting a disequilibrium in its own favor, had the flexibility to restore the balance in case of any change to its own disadvantage, the system worked. When the constellation itself, that is, the alignment of alliances, ententes, and friendships, became rigid, and the powers lost their flexibility of movement, it broke down. I remember a certain moment before World War I, in which the Russian minister of foreign affairs told a German friend,[4] "si vous lâches l'Autriche, je lâcherai la France immédiatement après." The Germans, informed about this invitation, decided not to listen. They did not trust the Russians and their "immédiatement après," nor could they. It was too late to abandon Austria without courting disaster. So much for the general background. My problem is with the relations of the European foreign offices and chancelleries to the press or, better, to the heroes or some heroes of the press. These relations were a kind of trade secret of both the government and the press. In some countries they still are.

In that period one sees in each of the European great powers the government surrounded by some heroes of the press. Great journalists, who are in the confidence of the government, get some information about secret matters—inside dope not to be published. Most governments played that game with some skill and had such dope ready which could be disclosed without harm, though its disclosure could still be used as a sign of confidence. Such knowledge is of great value to the journalists themselves, especially in the age of secret diplomacy, which, of course, never was entirely secret. These persons belonged to a kind of aristocracy of the press; they were persons of judgment and discretion and considerable experience, knowledge, and education—in any case not less knowledge than the average member of either the government or the diplomatic corps; they were persons of high social standing in their own right, though they did not belong to the aristocracy by birth or wealth. They understood hints or allusions, could be trusted with secrets or half secrets, were under no pressure to produce news value—the nightmare of the present-day journalist. They even could be trusted to be indiscreet in the right way and at the right time. I know something about such methods of co-operation, varying only slightly in different European capitals, as I was active in helping in this kind of co-operation. I take an example from my own experience. The German foreign office had received secret information about the relations between England and Russia becoming more friendly, with some impact on the Italian attitude—since Italy could not be expected to be a reliable ally in case Great Britain, on which Italy depended in many respects, sided with France and their Russian ally against Germany. The German government was worried about this piece of intelligence, since about the same time France seemed to show an increasing interest in some strategic railways to the Polish frontier, which Russia lacked, needed, and wanted to build. Now, the chief of the press department at the German office called together his closest friends of the

press—three leading journalists, all three men of great prestige, Berlin representatives of three leading newspapers of the West and South, the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the *Kölnische Zeitung* and the *Müncher Neueste Nachrichten*. He had these three men seated in his office, explained the case, and asked their advice about handling the press situation. It was the intention of the government to do a little warning, which would be understood in Paris as well as in some other capitals concerned, and, after some discussion, he put forth his own idea, which was to apply the so-called snowball technique. The *Kölnische Zeitung* should publish a cable from Paris, drawing attention to the content of the intelligence received as rumors in diplomatic circles in Paris, in an only slightly alarming but moderate tone; the *Frankfurter Zeitung* should take it up the next day in a cable from Berlin, saying something about the worry caused by this information in Berlin diplomatic circles and expressing the hope that the information of the *Kölnische Zeitung* would turn out not to be altogether correct; and then the third of the three heroes present should get the *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten* to comment on it in a leading editorial and on its political seriousness in case of its truth. This procedure was agreed upon—the ball was tossed to and fro. A very simple and quite efficient technique. The story had become news—the other German newspapers followed the hint and commented on the story, and the German Foreign Office could at any time tone down the discussion by some additional news or doubts about the accuracy or relevance of the information—this was actually done. But the foreign capitals had listened and were warned. In this case the original information had not been entirely correct at the moment, though it became true or nearly true some years later.

The other governments, London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and St. Petersburg used only slightly different methods—they too had their helpers in some heroes of the press and used them in similar, more or less refined, methods. The example is not a case of German shrewdness, subtlety, or perfidy—not even of the compliance of great newspapers with the wishes of the Government. I do not want to be misunderstood. Those three newspapers were liberal, their representatives were independent men of judgment and stature, rather critical of the government and, in domestic questions, nearer to the opposition than to the government. Their friendly relations to the Foreign Office were not confined to saying yes and complying with one or the other wish of the government. They could say no, and their no was listened to by the government. I remember another case in which the same three heroes of the press said a very loud no, when in an "academic" discussion of the so-called Morocco crisis in 1905–6, they expected or suspected that the German government in its intention to use the Russo-Japanese War for coming to a permanent modus vivendi with France intended to exert some pressure on France and might have or get the idea of doing some sword rattling in order to convince France that coming to terms with Germany would be a good idea. They were probably right in their suspicion of such an idea and left no doubt that the German people, i.e., public opinion, was by no means disposed or prepared to support such a policy

and that even the bluff would not work, as it would be apparent that the German people were by no means willing to go to war for any slice or share in Morocco. Thus, even the bluff needed a kind of silent consent of the people. The younger experts on a later Germany may not believe the story—but I know it is exact. It played a very substantial role in the succeeding decisions of the German chancellor, who, a few months later, preferred to liquidate this policy of the great minds of his foreign office by accepting an international conference—at Algeciras—and burying the problem in a legal squabble, in which the Germans, though believing in the superiority of their legal position, did not achieve anything approaching a diplomatic victory.

This, my third example, goes back to only eight years before World War I. The idyll of the balance of power, secret diplomacy, slow and cautious diplomatic movements, the influence of the heroes of the press on the press at large nears its end; the system of slowly shifting alliances is replaced by an inflexible system of two camps. This is the end. War breaks out; governmental restraints break down—the masses, the morale of the mass armies, finally the morale of the homefront, rationing of food and raw materials, demand priority—the subtleties disappear. Information and propaganda must reach the entire nation. The heroes of the press recede backstage; the number of government servants dealing with the press increases many times. It no longer suffices to take a few great journalists into the confidence of the government. The whole press must be received daily—press conferences are invented and so forth. All the people fight—and starve. Five years earlier the press office of the German government consisted of four civil servants, and yet had to deal with the whole press interest of the government, at home and abroad. They had at their disposal not more than $125,000 secret funds a year, a ridiculous sum which would have been too small to pay for the hundredth part of all the intrigues, bribery, corruption, and schemes attributed to the German Foreign Office in all these years. This, too, was part of the idyll. Compared with the scale on which the corresponding work is done nowadays, it is an idyll. I could give you illustrations from my memory—as I had, for a few years, to do such work. I had $1000 a year to bribe the Egyptian press. The sum was enough to pay a third rate fellow to write one or two articles praising the German Egyptologists working in Egypt, or some German diplomat coming to Egypt, or about other such equally unimportant matters. Now there are somewhere dozens and dozens of civil servants spending millions with still less success. All remnants and traces of aristocratic demeanor faded more or less slowly, and not only in Germany; and when the English appointed Mr. Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, to organize the atrocity propaganda on a world-wide scale, even the war on paper started to become total war—a war era began.

Yet the great press existed and continued to exist.

What are the conclusions to be drawn from my three so disparate examples? I will try to draw some, rather cautiously and with various reservations. All deal with specific political decisions which need some kind of consent that is and must be engineered. The paraphernalia of modern mass

communication do not yet play a role. Their potentialities still await exploitation. Yet in spite of the differences of the societies from which these examples are drawn, they all illustrate either the conflict or competition between reason and emotion and their share in engineering consent, or the partly parallel conflict between upper and lower strata of the journalistic world, or both conflicts interlaced. These conflicts, however, keep on being very real indeed; they reach into the mass society of our own day and all its techniques, though we use different terms and do not talk about our heroes of the press, though they are still heroes, sometimes even engaged in a heroic fight against giant animals—which, like the prehistoric ones, have oversized bodies and undersized brains.

The three heroes of my last example did not write for, nor were they read by, the masses. They were conspicuous for their judgment, and enjoyed prestige. Such an upper stratum exists even nowadays and in this country of ours. Their utterances are read again by an upper class of readers, inside or outside the government. This is their success. They, too, can dissent. Their independence increases their prestige. They are not the most successful in terms of the money they earn. They are patriots and do not publish everything they know, and to some extent they too depend on the information they get—besides depending on their newspapers and their preferences for conformity, i.e., on their idea that only things which do not disturb their readers are "fit to be printed." Thus it is the same, very old song about the plight of the independent journalist. Vulgarity, lack of restraint, sensation, news value, sometimes gossip, bring more money but even now do not give prestige. Even the modern press is still a stratified profession, though the strata are not institutionalized and thus stabilized. And the dealings of governments with the heroes of the press are still a kind of secret of the trade.

In 1914 the "masses" of the industrial age are already in existence—yet they play a passive role. War breaks out. The governments, of necessity, start appealing to their patriotic spirit, their sense of duty toward country, nation, or state, to their fighting spirit. All fatherlands have to be defended. "Propaganda," in the modern sense, is invented, and slowly develops its semi-scientific techniques. War communiqués have to be published; setbacks are played down, victories are played up. All kinds of emotions are aroused. Efficiency claims priority. The enthusiasm of the soldier, believing in, or anticipating, victory and the caution, moderation, and wisdom of the statesman and the diplomat start on their variable struggle. The silent masses, appealed to, become a powerful reality. Yet the modern media of mass communication from coast to coast do not as yet exist. They await our own age to enter the picture.

III

I shall no longer discuss times bygone. I now come to our own age and society, its predicaments, its cherished fallacies, and its fictions. Thus we shall journey in a land familiar to all. Yet we shall not take the much used highways; they are jammed with traffic, and some of them lead our thinking in circles around the most interesting places.

We are told that this is the age of the masses. In the thirties, one could hear, not only in Germany, an occasional re-

mark by which some people defended their support of a promising demagogue by saying that in this age of the masses "we" need a man who can handle the masses. In certain phases in the development of modern society there is such a "we" in each country: in Germany during the years before Hitler's rise to power, the followers of Hugenberg in big industry; in France during the thirties, the friends of the 200 families around the Banque de France; in this country the people whom Franklin Roosevelt in a fit of temper called the "Long Island fascists." The sentence is meant as a concession to a new age; it recognizes the masses. As political advice it is a grave error; the manipulator of the masses, with the financial help of his supporters, rises to political power and ends with maneuvering his supporters out of their economic power and political influence.

We talk a great deal about the masses and in many different senses of the term which we fail to articulate: about mass opinion, a mass mind, mass emotion, a science of mass psychology (or is it pseudo-science?), mass communication, mass media, mass sale, mass entertainment, and, first of all, about mass consumption and mass production. We are very fond of the word. The salesman, the propagandist, the government, each and every politician, all want to reach the masses. An undefined concept of the mass, identified with the people, dominates our way of thinking and acting, and very understandably: mass means money and money means all things, even relative freedom from the mass.

What do we mean by mass? The first answer is all too simple—mass means a large multitude of human beings. In this first sense it means nothing but the large number. Units are counted. Borrowing the expression from the late Emil Lederer,[5] I call these masses "abstract masses." This term is an abstraction from all other properties such a mass and/or its members may have, especially from any interrelation among the members, i.e., whether or not they stick together and how and why, whether they are in contact with one another or not. They are an aggregate, a sum of unit numbers. We do not say anything about the state of the aggregate—whether it is like a pile of sand, or comparable to a liquid, a gas, or a crystal or to what the chemist calls a colloid or to a virus which forms one single molecule though it may consist of two million atoms and has an organic structure, each atom having its specific function in that structure. Obviously the abstract mass does not exist. No quantity of man exists as an abstract mass in this sense, least of all in politics. Obviously the most interesting and politically relevant things are just those things from which the abstraction is made—the state of the aggregate, the interaction between its members. The abstract mass is the mass of consumers, where this interaction does not matter.

Nonetheless, the abstract mass is a great reality of modern life. There is an infinite variety of such abstract masses. Something can be done to them and with them, and they do something to us. They listen to Walter Winchell, run to movies we detest, and refuse to read our books. They are or can be very powerful through the ideas that we or our politicians or our publishers or preachers or poets or our magazines and journals have about them.

Thorstein Veblen saw in the salesman the average modern American. He may not be right. Yet the salesman is certainly a figure of increasing importance

in our life. He became it by virtue of our enthusiasm for efficient salesmanship. He thinks in terms of mass sale and mass propaganda for his product whatever it may be and forms an idea about the mass of the people he longs to reach. He does not stop at forming an idea in his mind. He forms or tries to form the mass according to this idea; if not the mass, then the prevailing mood. The salesman recommends a soap or a hair rinse on the radio. He has the idea that the great majority of females want first of all to look nice or to smell sweet or to be alluring or to enhance their appeal. He praises the representative real or imaginary qualities of his soap or hair rinse likely to appeal to a majority. He tells the girls what would happen to them if they buy and if they do not buy that hair rinse (that is the technique of hope and threat)—the boss and the male clerks in the office, the boy friend and all potential boy friends will look at her with pleasure and a benevolent grin. If she does not rush to the nearest drugstore around the corner to buy the hair rinse, no wolf will whistle at her, she will find it harder to get a job. The advertiser has started to create his audience of prospective buyers or to create a specific mood in which a large section of his unknown audience will be inclined to buy. The listeners are no longer entirely abstract. Emotions, innocent ones, are aroused and unite the people for a moment in a parallel desire.

Yet the multitude of receptive listeners is still a multitude. Their interests and opinions are like, not common. They act, each girl for herself, not in common. There need not be contact or interrelation among the members.

The advertiser and his demand do not stop here. The sponsor buys the time—the right to have his commercial inserted in a story or in a comment on the news or in a piece of music to be broadcast. The price he is willing to pay for his time depends on the attractiveness of this piece in whose context the commercial is to be inserted. The attractiveness, of course, means, first of all, attractive for the largest possible audience. The networks and radio stations leave it to the sponsors not only to choose their programs, but to make them or have them made according to their wishes by the advertising agencies. The sponsor rules supreme. In ordinary times he is as apolitical as his audience. The sponsor has another interest in addition to the large size of the audience. He has an interest in what the experts of the trade call the receptive mood of the audience—receptive to the commercial. This sounds harmless, but it is not. It means practically that the sponsor has or believes he has an interest in keeping away from the audience all material that is likely to dampen this receptive mood—for instance, too serious a subject, too much reasoning and intellectual effort in understanding an argument, and, above all, anything that might suggest a critical mood and the need for doubt or disturb the peace of soul and mind by too much dissent from generally accepted assumptions. I am not talking about the real mood and thinking of such audiences, but about the idea of their mind and temper in the imagination of sponsors and advertisers. They underestimate the intellect and the critical faculty of their audience, the more so the larger the audience. To them the "common" man means the lowest common denominator. The "ordinary folks" addressed in the fireside chats of Franklin D. Roosevelt are not so ordinary. By

underestimating the audience they degrade it, and by degrading they change their audience until finally the listeners are bound to become more and more infantile. I may exaggerate—there are exceptions and serious efforts against this kind of "education." I admit that this underestimation of reason is not peculiar to the radio business. Other mass media, movies and comic books, are engaged in a similar process of stultification and may be more successful in their way. In the ratings of audiences by and for the movie industry, only the moviegoers under thirty years of age are counted, since not the number of visitors but the number of visits matter financially. The teen-agers go every day, whereas the more mature people stay away more and more with increasing maturity. What matters here is the dynamism at work:[6] the nature of the business generates, of necessity, the search for the large audience, and this search in turn favors a certain politically inoffensive conformism, in avoidance of reason and reasoning, criticism and doubt. It lowers the *niveau* or level in the content of communications made for the masses until the dissenting commentator has no chance—his rating by the enterprises specializing in rating falls, and his sponsor, in case he has found one, abandons him. There are examples for this in the various fields of mass communication, including newspapers. Pressure is exerted on sponsors or circulation managers, and courageous comment of news, of governmental acts, i.e., lively criticism, is driven off the air or the columns of the paper. The leading editor of a great newspaper in the West refuses to publish a certain columnist: "Oh, he is much too articulate." "Mass mind" is created by the idea of a mass mind dominating "the powers that be" in the communication industry.

I return to the first sense of "mass"—the abstract mass as a mere multitude. The abstract mass exists: the people running to and fro in Grand Central Station, each on his errand, isolated individuals, unconnected. The extreme case illustrates the meaning of mass as a mere multitude of considerable size. The large audience of the modern media of mass communications is something more than an abstract mass despite all the interest the communications industry may have in the size of the listening multitude. This "something more" is politically rather important, though it is not at all easy to say what it is in a generally applicable and valid sense. The big audience, though an abstract mass, is potentially, if not actually, a different thing, which should no longer be called a mass. It is a potential crowd, men predisposed to act as a crowd.

The necessity of defining crowd as distinct from mass does not bother me. Since the crowd is the most and best studied of all groups, I can follow here the science of sociology. I have only to recall some examples of crowds and crowd behavior. In a theater audience, when some person shouts fire and people start to run, the whole multitude is likely to get panicky and to act as a crowd. Dozens may be trampled to death before anybody discovers that there is no fire worth the name. A mob in the street lynches an alleged murderer in a sweep of fury—similar cases, more or less extreme, can happen everywhere, and the mass media need not share responsibility for creating them. We talk of contagion, suggestion, imitation—it does not matter which form we use, and none of them need be the cause. It happens only in particular cir-

cumstances: contact of the individuals involved, in a setting of violent emotions caused by some real or imaginary event, with little information available and no way of checking it. A certain urgency, demanding immediate action, sweeps the individual, his reason, his critical faculty; each one has only the other to rely upon; his fantasy exaggerates the danger, the crime, or whatever the reasons are for the behavior of the others. He is defenseless, and afterward wonders why he did and could act in such a foolish way. These examples are extreme cases of multitudes as crowds. There are a great many not so extreme examples, mixed cases of all varieties—masses becoming more or less hysterical though not yet becoming crowds in the proper sense of the term. Some are of potential political importance and are not at all harmless.

I must, however, insert a theoretical remark. In speaking of abstract masses and of crowds, I do not refer to different groups. I speak about different states of aggregation. I do not want to make a contribution to the attempt of sociologists to classify groups or bring order into the infinite diversity of groups. The distinction I make is between different states of aggregation and parallels the distinction the chemist makes between the gaseous, liquid, colloid, or crystalline state of the same chemical, and I assume that this distinction is relevant for both theory and practice of politics. The same multitude, consisting of the same individuals, can behave either as a mass or as a crowd. Now in this industrial age, thanks to technological progress, the politican can, under certain circumstances, manipulate the abstract mass into a crowd. The members of the mass need not even be in contact with one another, in the same room. Even the radio audience, each one listening in his or her home, can become a crowd, and act like a crowd, as they certainly did in the case of the famous radio story about an invasion from Mars by Orson Welles. People phone one another, the story and the fear spread, attempts to check the story fail, and a mass hysteria is in the making before anything is or can be done about it. Or when a great and victorious soldier, a dramatic general, opposed his government and was ordered home, millions filled the streets to see him and to hear his story, in all the greater cities from coast to coast; and many people here and abroad talked of a paroxysm that had got hold of the American people. One may doubt whether one could call that a hysteria or not, or whether this mass was a multitude and only on the verge of becoming a crowd—as an explanation of the kind of crowd to be united by a violent emotion, aroused by the dramatic figure, the soldier glory, the surprise and indignation over his sudden dismissal or his apparent idea to end the war in Korea by a greater war with China.

But my story does not end with the mass changing into a crowd. Crowds do not last; the violent emotion that unites the crowd and activates it passes away—crowds, insofar as they are nothing but crowds, do not cling together. Crowds need a leader or a few leaders, or an equivalent, to hold them together. The leader has to perpetuate the emotion or arouse new ones, one after the other, or make them apparently consistent and embody them in fictions, convictions, principles, misnamed an "ideology."[7] Without a leader they do not become active but go home and wonder how they had ever gotten into that crowd mind; perhaps this hap-

pened even to many people who listened in rapture to the dramatic general, and who can now listen quietly to what the other side has to say. The crowd has to be organized. But the organized crowd is no longer a crowd—nor is it again a mass as multitude. It is a herd,[8] divided along the lines of sex and age groups, following the shepherd—regimented and put into uniforms. It is not simply another group consisting of different individuals; it is again a state of aggregation, and a rather particular one, distinct from the abstract mass as well as from the crowd. The organizer of the herd does not look at the natural social groupings, families, kinships, friendships, likes and dislikes of his animals —they do not play a role. The members of the herd are counted as units, they are freed from all their former loyalties and are regarded as equal, until they are ordered to a new post to perform the task ascribed to them by the shepherd and his helpers. They are, insofar as the shepherd, leader, or dictator is concerned, strangers to one another. The leader even prefers them to be strangers to one another, like the Greek tyrant in Aristotle's *Politics*[9] who, suspicious of all natural groups, even of the ties of unnatural love, kills off the traditional leaders, transplants the population, frees the slaves, mixes citizens of different origins, and atomizes the societies he wants to dominate. In an industrial society of the modern scale, the dictator cannot imitate all the measures of the Greek tyrant, but his principles and intentions are the same, as is the particular state of aggregation at which he aims.[10]

Early capitalism uprooted the handicraft and mixed the workers, who from all sides migrated to the urban centers of industrial production. Thus it began to create an internal proletariat of an atomized society—to use an expression of Toynbee's—and prepared the ground for a future dictator. At the time of the Russian revolution of 1917, the industrial proletariat in the few industrial centers of Russia was still in this state. If the development of the workers' movement in the great industrial nations of Europe had not organized the workers and overcome this atomization, we might well have witnessed at a much earlier date another Lenin's rise to power, given an external crisis and the despair of the uprooted masses—a tightly organized group of trained revolutionaries, conquering the state in the name of the proletariat. The leader organizes his own power and that of his group of commissars—not following Marx or any Marxist tradition, but Bakunin, his helper Netchayev, and Ktatchov, a purely Russian tradition, though perhaps, but not necessarily, using Marx, dialectical materialism, and the eschatological promise for ideological purposes.

Of course, to order and to streamline masses into herds needs more than the atomization of the society or the crowd mentality and occasional emotions. It needs a combined monopoly of propaganda and violence, and neither one can work without the other. Violence will soon be forced to resort to propaganda, propaganda to resort to violence, as long as human beings are what they always have been and ever will be. Violence silences the potential dissenter by fear and puts the actual dissenter away into concentration camps or graves. Propaganda works for a body of fictions, principles, stereotypes, which guides the thinking and in the extreme case achieves half-voluntary obedience and receptivity for whatever crowd-emotions

the shepherd wants to elicit in the animals of his herd.

In line with our nineteenth-century inheritance, we think of the development of the herd and the rise to power of leaders and dictators in economic terms and talk about a transition period from capitalism to socialism; but for the political phenomenon this frame is far too narrow.

I have to do here with another transition—the transition from one state of aggregation to another state of aggregation, from the mass to the crowd, from the crowd to the herd. Insofar as economic development, as in early capitalism, or a total war and defeat, means an atomization of the masses, uproots and disperses the individuals, destroys ties and natural groups, it prepares the potential herd and the way for the dictatorial leader of modern times.

The dictatorial leader is here not my concern. I have to do with the different meanings of the term mass. Before I leave the masses and turn to the people, which is not, though it can become, an abstract mass, a crowd, or a herd, I give an example of a human herd; it does not make much difference whether I take my example from the Red Square in Moscow or from the Parteitag in Nuremberg. The herd marches in its formations, it fills the arena. I doubt whether you have, or can have, an idea how impressive such a spectacle can be, especially to the spectator who is invited to watch it in order to be impressed—the mere size of the regimented mass, the uniformity of response to the speech of the leader or his delegate—one body, one mind—the illusion of a united people. In the moment of their enthusiastic response to an address, this mass seems to be the people. They may believe themselves, for one and the following moment, that they are the people. Hitler, in his intuitive knowledge of the military, had the habit of inviting a few of his army generals with their wives to Nuremberg, providing good seats for them. They were simply overwhelmed—they never dreamt of such a spectacle. They did not doubt for a moment that this was the German people, firm in the hand of their admired Führer, the nation united. They, especially the wives, went home, full of admiration and never talked Putsch again, nor would they allow their husband generals to think of Putsch. Yet for those who with a soberer mind stood in an SA formation and could observe the behavior of the individuals as individuals, their cautious muttering and whispering, the story appeared to be different. To them it was not the first time, they had seen and heard it before; it had always been the same thing, tiring and boring. They had to rise early, be crowded in a train for Nuremberg and then wait, wait, and again wait. The first time the majority were impressed. The second time they were disgruntled and bored. This was not the German nation united, it was not "the people." Of course their weariness and boredom did not mean a thing, politically. When you asked the same individual singly why, though disgruntled and bored, he had joined the party and whether he really believed in that shabby, provincial, and nonsensical ideology, you got such answers as this: Yes, I did; I admit it is a lot of nonsense, but after all, it gives a frame of reference, a firm though a narrow one, and a will, an aim and a direction, and an answer, and that is what all that scientific stuff and wide philosophy did not give us. They gave us a hundred contradictory and incon-

sistent answers, a wide but confused world in which we could not find our way. Now at least we belong somewhere and know where we belong and need not doubt and waver the whole time. Such were the answers given by many gifted students, and they of course were the minority; I need not tell you that this kind of reason held still more for the ungifted and uneducated but equally uprooted and confused—they felt safe and protected and to some extent "secure" in the middle of the "masses," knowing how they should think and act.

This is a rather sad story—the mass, first being only an abstraction, growing into a crowd, and crowds being organized as herds. It is a change of the state of aggregation through which the masses become very concrete indeed. Even if not activated, the crowd and the herd accompany as inherent potentialities the masses of the industrial age.

I do not hold responsible the modern media of mass communication. By preparing and eagerly exploiting the mass mind, they share unwittingly in the responsibility, but they are innocent; they know not what they are doing but are merely following the dynamics of their business which prompts them to cater to abstract masses. They are to be excused, as nobody ever taught them anything about the distinction between the different senses of "mass." Even modern science, instead of articulating these senses, seems to accept the undefined term. If the business leaders accept the ratings and statistics of audiences, science for the sake of an allegedly scientific method seems to accept them too and could not teach these business men much even if they were as teachable as elephants, the most teachable animal—which I doubt they are.[11]

Masses, crowds, and herds are not the people, or are so only for shorter or longer stretches of time. One day or another they will begin, but only begin, to be a people again. But what is the people? I shall not try to give a definition of the word and its present usage. I shall try to avoid a theoretical argument with the political or the social scientist and will be content, for the time being, with a preliminary meaning of the term, relying on common sense. We all know or think we know what we mean when we talk about the German people, the American people, the French, or the English. We mean the nation, the most manifest form, in which a people is a political reality—acting, feeling, and thinking, each nation in a peculiar way of its own. The nation is a society in operation. It seems to be a pluralistic society—yet we treat it as a unity. What is that by virtue of which it is a unity? It seems to be a vast complex of all kinds of associations, families, professions, economic enterprises, church communities, and the like, unnamed others, co-operating for certain concrete but partial purposes, associating and dissociating again, competing, quarreling, agreeing, and disagreeing with one another, responding to one another and claiming to be responded to—yet it is not simply an aggregate of a multitude of such associations, and, though it consists of individuals, it is not simply an aggregate of individuals.

The society in operation is what it is in the process of operation. In this process the people and all their various groups and associations, responding to one another and being responded to by

one another, form together a universe of mutual response. The universe means two things: it is a unity, the unity of a process, and it is or tends to be and is intended to be all embracing. The mutual response is total response, not to this or that partial question or interest, but to all changing questions of public concern affecting the well-being of the society as a whole, directly or indirectly. The people in the continuity of this mutual response are more than an association for this or that purpose—they themselves determine and change and vary their aims, though still with reference to one another. They are somehow aware of the perspectives of others and are able to take them into account, though not always willingly. The response, though mutual, is unequal. In this continuous process the national universe of discourse bestows prestige, the right to be responded and listened to, recognizes and denies claims to be responded to; and thus the society in this process stratifies itself, though it need not institutionalize and stabilize the stratification—people gain and lose prestige, both in millions of neighborhoods and on a nation-wide scale. Though this society may seem to be rather pluralistic in the variety of its changing and diverging interests, emotions, and opinions, a noisy and busy confusion, it still is and becomes at any moment again a unity, but only if and as far as the people and its different sections, parties, and associations go on listening to one another and remain aware of their reciprocal perspectives. When the universe of response splits into separate pieces, workers listening only to workers, manufacturers only to manufacturers, then the unity of the process breaks asunder, and the people will soon see the last day of their relative freedom—after a short period of cold civil war. This had happened to the German people before Hitler could come to power.

Such a society, in this process of continuous response to the totality of its experience, develops a way of life and perhaps what we call a culture or a variation of a broader civilization; it watches and controls the government entrusted with domestic order and its foreign interests. This government has to make political decisions, needs real or apparent consent, and encounters dissent; it can act only within the varying range of potential consent to its actions.

We know all that—we live and die in such a society, each as a "one," and "one" is here not only a number. We are *individuals,* and I hope stubborn and a potential source of surprise, even for our wives. We argue and listen to arguments and want others to listen to ours —such a two-way "communication" is not mass communication. We try to get at a reasonable opinion. A great deal of reasoning is going on in such a society. We are not only individuals, we are members of groups, of various groups, of a church community or labor union, loyal to each particular loyalty; we are not only individuals and not only members of a group, but as one we are the other and remain the other, and in all our multiple memberships we are one of the people, partaking in the operation of the society and sharing its lot—we are fettered to the entire vast process of production, consumption, transportation, distribution, insurance, on whose relatively smooth functioning we and our children depend, especially in the industrial age,

whereas in other periods we depended mainly on the harvest of our county. We cannot help it—the lot of the people is our lot. And thus we reason to and fro, in between this and that particular loyalty, between both our emotions and interests as members of this or that trade, this or that group, about the public interest in this or that question—and if we know nothing or but very little about this or that question, we ask others, friends we credit with some judgment, or we even read the papers, this or that writer or columnist who knows something about China, or read one or the other of those people who enjoy nationwide prestige and whom I have called here the heroes of the press. They exist, they are important, they are supposed to have done some thinking, though these unfortunate people are compelled to do their thinking very fast and to produce their opinions without delay. And as long as we are still able, somehow, to do all this conscientiously, we may forget the abstract masses, the crowd, and the lingering danger of the herd and may even enjoy in our easier moments that something which T. S. Eliot calls "distraction by distraction from distraction" and which the giants of the movie industry call "entertainment."

IV

The modern statesman, engaged in political action proper, and about to make a real political decision, dreading dissent and needing consent, is confronted with "public opinion." He feels the impact of its power. He must cope with it.

I assume that the statesman has made up his mind—he knows what he wants to achieve for his country and the best way to go about it. The element of necessity inherent in the circumstances limits the possibilities open to him, yet urges him to act. I make the further assumption, wholly unreal today, that his decision is made without any regard for the possible consent or dissent of public opinion and does not yet imply a concession of any kind but is based solely on the merits of the case. This assumption is unreal because under modern conditions the political problem of potential consent and dissent of a public is already in the mind of the statesman before he shapes his ideas about any issue.

For a number of reasons I draw my examples of total political action from the field of foreign policy. Here actions are total; they commit the actor. They have had their consequences before they can be modified, and involve the actor in the play of necessity, chance, and his political virtue. Mistakes can be repaired only if his opponent makes bigger mistakes, i.e., by undeserved luck. We are far from the comfortable situation of this country before World War I when it was protected on each side by an ocean of some size and, in addition, by the British domination of the seven seas. Then foreign policy was part of the domestic game, and a decision made for reasons of domestic, party, or personal expediency did not endanger the life of the American people. The United States was growing in international weight, potential political influence, and economic power independently of the foreign policy its government pursued. In other words, it could make mistakes without serious harm to its people. Its situation was quite exceptional, and the less fortunate nations of Europe could only envy it. This has radically changed: World War II left two great powers facing each

other. As leader and backbone of a system of alliances of militarily and economically weak countries, some of which are rather reluctant allies, the United States has moral and political commitments throughout the world. In this situation one false step can lead to a war in which the victor will be vanquished and the vanquished may be the victor if he survives at all. I need not insist on the seriousness of the situation, the more serious as this country is mentally and traditionally unprepared for such a role. All I am going to say should be viewed and thought about against this background.

To clarify the situation I assume that this country, at some time or other in the future, decides to alter the general line of its foreign policy. The assumption is arbitrary and entirely fictitious, made only for the sake of a theoretical argument. However, it could happen; it could even be a reasonable decision. The American government, for instance, might discover that the rulers of Russia would much prefer not to have an American-Russian frontier (the Iron Curtain is for all practical purposes such a frontier) and would be ready to pay a certain price for a worldwide settlement doing away with such frontiers, i.e., to negotiate a *modus vivendi* that restricted the areas of direct friction between the two powers and thus reduce the heat of the cold war. Let us assume that the political leaders of this country decide to explore the possibilities of such a settlement and its specific content, with the not unreasonable idea that the present state cannot last ad infinitum without leading to a war that can neither be fought nor ended.

At each and every step the government meets "public opinion." The public is not a public, and the opinions need not yet be opinions. The opinions are dispositions to potential opinions. These potential opinions are sentiments rather than opinions, vague feelings, likes and dislikes, half-conscious preferences. They are many and diverse, inconsistent and even contradictory. They are not yet sentiments of this or that particular man, about this or that particular issue. Yet opinions exist as potentialities. The statesman is not confronted with a virgin multitude whose actual opinions can be induced or led in any direction the propagandist pleases. He meets, first of all, very powerful no's—opposition to measures, opinions, sentiments, ways of reasoning he wants to put across. These no's are of very different kinds: some concern only words that at a given moment would better not be used though they are perfectly good words and make politically rather good sense; such a word has for some time been and is still "appeasement." The statesmen would have to use another word expressing the same thing if he thinks that the Russians should or could be "appeased." This, of course, is not difficult. I call the power of these no's the negative power of potential public opinion. This negative power can be very considerable; even when these no's remain silent, it restricts the range of governmental action.

All modern governments, and those not so modern too, especially their foreign offices, are squeezed between such powerful no's, things they cannot do or say or even think of considering, fearing the potential dissent of influential men or groups.

The archives and folios of the German Foreign Office were regarded as war booty. Some are probably now in Washington, others in London. If the allies would take the trouble to look

into these files, they would discover, doubtless to their astonishment, memoranda written by the leaders of the political department of the Foreign Office, addressed to the Chancellor as head of the government, criticizing openly and soberly each of the main mistakes and imperialistic enterprises in which the German government engaged (and thus committed the Reich): the seizure of Tsingtan, a port in China; the support of Turkey against Russia; and, above all, the building of a navy. A decade before World War I the German leaders had the benefit of this criticism, approved of it, but did not heed it. They were blocked by powerful no's; they could not retreat from any of these positions though, situated as Germany was in the middle of Europe, all these imperialistic enterprises were mere romanticism, worthless in wartime and an easy target for foreign propaganda. Why these no's were so powerful is a long story which I shall not take the time to tell.[12]

There are other examples nearer this country, of pressures brought to bear upon the State Department, which some years ago stood in awe of sensational columnists, such as Drew Pearson and Walter Winchell, feared the fuss they would stir up if they got hold of this or that piece of information, and now stand in awe of Senator McCarthy. The civil servants are hampered in their daily tasks and restricted in their range of possible action by fear. Or take the war story told by Churchill. When he informed the President of the United States that the King of Italy and Marshal Badoglio intended to abandon Hitler and make a separate peace, the President's answer was that negotiations with the King and Badoglio would lead to a considerable fuss in this country, and that, in any case, they should be kept as close as possible to unconditional surrender. I do not think that this offer of a separate peace was very valuable. However, no one knew at the time how much force was behind the King and his Marshal, and the reasons for shoving the possibility aside had still less value. Thus the war went on two years more in Italy, and Italy had to be conquered from South to North, piece by piece.

Such is the power of the no's—sometimes created or enhanced by the action of the governments themselves. Governments are lucky—no one can prove they erred, restore a situation, and make an experiment of what would have happened if. Political action moves in a moving world in which each moment is unique.

Behind some, though not all, of these no's stand organized sections or groups, vocal minorities of divers kinds, always ready to act; and when they act, potential dissent becomes actual. But they exert considerable influence even before acting through the fear they instill in the minds of government, governmental agencies, and certain individuals, prospective targets of attack. In the particular case of a shift toward a *modus vivendi* with Russia, these groups would probably include at least some, if not all, of the racial or national minority groups, insofar as they are somehow organized and have their public relations officers, and who fear that concessions would be made to the Russians at their expense or indirectly harmful to their special interests. They may include the people whose job it is, or who believe it to be their job, to defend the interest of the Chinese Nationalist government in Formosa against any concession to Communist China, and so forth—they

might make quite a list, and though each is a small minority fighting for some sectional interest, the sum of all these minorities may amount to a substantial opposition. The dissenting voices will be rather loud—the case will not be argued in the name of the sectional interest of the dissenters but in the interest of the American people and America's national interest. Hence the arguments will not be arguments of sober political reasons but of emotions and emotional indignations referring to the noble tradition of generosity of this country which has always been, and has been regarded as, friend, champion, and the hope of the weak and the oppressed. They may appeal to the gratitude the American people could and should feel for those who espoused the American side in their struggle and long suffering against the Communist governments in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and so forth, speak of silent moral commitments made by the United States toward these people by keeping alive their hope for liberation and their resistance to their Communist government. In the case of Nationalist China, the American people are likely to hear that their government is about to abandon their last friend and longest companion in battle and so on—and probably many Americans will be susceptible to some of these emotional arguments.

May I remind you that the case as presented here, a shift in the policy toward Russia, is wholly unreal, a mere construction for the sake of an argument. It is unreal because the United States made so many concessions, on the way from Teheran to Potsdam, to its Russian companion in war that its back would now be to the wall in any negotiation. There is no room left for further concessions that would not affect the vital interests of this country itself.

Despite the unreality of the case, I am going a bit further. Some of this potential dissent will become actual dissent. The organizations of sectional interest which are hurt or believe they are hurt will speak out loudly. Arguments with emotional appeal will be addressed to the American public in American terms. The emotions appealed to will be dear to American hearts. Mere emotional excitement would pass. Emotions evaporate. They have to be aroused anew by new facts, suggesting fear, indignation, gratitude, resentment, or whatever. The propagandist is not satisfied with mere emotions. He has to make them stable as far as possible. There must be reasons for the emotion, a kind of general judgment, helping the mere emotions to survive from one instant to the next. Here only the propagandist proves his skill. He "rationalizes" the emotions, linking the unstable emotions to reasons that can be expected to last for a while. These reasons are like the "whalebones" that keep some parts of feminine underwear in shape to support the weakness of the human flesh. The so-called Nazi ideology consisted mainly of such whalebones intended to keep the emotions alive.

This rationalization follows quite naturally, and without reflecting on traditional logic, the form of the ordinary syllogism. The propaganda syllogism starts from the conclusion to be drawn, which is known and fixed, that is, the emotion to be aroused, looks for some facts as minor premises, and ends with a major premise under which the facts can be subsumed.

Aristotle, by the way, discovered his

syllogism as a technique in the art of persuasion. Get your opponent to agree to a major premise and a minor premise and you have him regardless of their truth—you can force him to draw the conclusion that is your aim.

In the case of Goebbels' anti-Semitic propaganda, the conclusion was "kill the Jews, burn their synagogues." It is not hard to construct the minor and major premises of the syllogism leading to this conclusion, as neither the logical procedure need be correct, though it must seem to be correct, nor the minor and major premises be true, though they must seem to be true. The minor premise might be some statement about some alleged facts, instances of offensive Jewish behavior. They may be pure inventions but should not be too obviously inventions, and are of course interpreted in the light of the conclusion to be drawn. Even the German public ridiculed in a joke the headlines in the *Stuermer:* "Jewish peddler bites German sheepdog." This happens to coincide with the definition of news put forth many years ago by the editor of the *New York Sun:* "Dog bites man is not, man bites dog is news."

These instances—descriptions of this or that behavior—are epitomized in a general statement concerning all Jews or, for the time being, all Germans or all Communists. General statements constitute the major premise in which the propaganda syllogism, starting from the consequences, usually ends. They are the stereotypes in terms of which the so-called common man is assumed to think. Accepted at their face value, they underlie the universe of discourse and are repeated over and over. The less knowledge and experience a person has, the more impressed will he be. Most judgments by one people about another people—American judgments about the English, the Italians, or the French—are such stereotypes. An infinite variety of general judgments is current in a country. They are of different kinds and origins. Some are products of the rationalization of sentiments that have outlived their origin. They can be powerful though the sentiments died long ago or live only a shadow life in some words or phrases or turns of phrases. Transmitted from generation to generation, they refuse to die. People are strangely unwilling to let them go; they hold on to them as once they cherished the sentiments from which they grew. In each and every modern nation, the national universe of discourse is full of general political judgments, old and new. Some are quite reasonable, the outcome of a long historical experience that justifies them. They too can dominate the ideas of people about foreign policy and national interest. I hastily mention a few examples to explain what I mean. For instance, the Germans are convinced by their own painful history as a nation that they always "miss the bus." It was so in the past, it is so now, and will be so in the future. They believe it their destiny to be too late. Hence a certain impatience and restiveness have characterized their political activities. This conviction was the source of their most conspicuous errors. Actually, by quietly waiting, they could have gotten what they could reasonably hope for. Such a belief, as a national way of thinking, is a powerful reality, guiding not only the opinions of the people but the actions of the rulers. Here, however, hangs a long tale. The French, concluding from the memory of centuries that German weakness meant French strength, and vice versa, believe that

whatever harms Germany helps France. This thesis, supported by history yet only half-true, like all such generalizations, dominates their thinking even now, though under present conditions German strength means French safety. In the past one could persuade an individual Frenchman that this was not so under all circumstances, but two or three Frenchmen in a group would not admit it. The belief underlies the French universe of political discourse from which an individual Frenchman, but no group of Frenchmen, would deviate. And even the English, the wisest and politically most experienced of all European nations, have inveterate habits of political thinking to which they stick in the face of changed circumstances. Even the great Mr. Churchill has some. After World War II, or in the last year of it, he had to defend his policy in Parliament against some critics of his war aims. Russia, not England, was the real victor and was now, therefore, much more of a threat to British interests and security than Germany had been. His answer was that one can deal, after all, with only one link in the chain of destiny at a time. Obviously he took it for granted that, just as there was during the last four hundred years of English history, there would again be an interval of 100 to 150 years between the present and the next link in the chain of destiny, though it was quite evident at the time that Russian dominance would follow the German danger immediately and without an interval.

Of course these three examples are simplified. In each case the real story is much more complex. I mention them as examples of only a certain kind of general judgment in which history itself leads the nations astray, sometimes to their own disaster. About the first years of this century there was a saying in the German Foreign Office that the British whale and the Russian bear could never come together. It was used to ridicule the German Ambassador in London, Count Hatzfeldt, who had predicted they could and would if Germany continued her twice-foolish policy of building a navy and at the same time relieving the English by taking it upon herself to block the Russian ambition to gain Constantinople. A few years later the Russian bear and the British whale started to find their way to each other.

When we praise the United States for not having this kind of political principle, we forget that the reason is that its history is too short for Americans to have fixed their ideas about their national interest in rules of this kind. I fear the American universe of political discourse has plenty of other fictions, different in kind and origin, but no less misleading.

Such general statements become inveterate habits of thinking. They circulate and are transmitted from generation to generation, at least in relatively quiet times. Unchallenged, they are repeated, and underlie as major premises the queer syllogisms in which we rationalize our vague sentiments. As they are rash generalizations, and in their generalized form fictitious, I call them fictions, though many of them contain a larger or smaller bit of truth. They are assumptions, and all need qualification.

In our construction of a concrete case, public opinion does not as yet exist actually. There is not as yet any concrete issue of a concession to be made to Russia or to be sought from Russia. Both the public and its opinions

are potential: this or that specific public would be likely to have this or that opinion in case this or that were proposed.

Because of the true or imaginary idea about public opinion which the group in power has, it is potentially powerful before it actually exists. It is a disposition to some sentiments and against others, i.e., preferences. The negative ones, the various do not's, are easier to guess and will be the first that come to governmental minds. Behind these various dispositions to preferences and sentiments there may be, in some cases, organized groups representing sectional interests, ready to jump to their defense if they fear that their interests will be hurt; and behind one or the other of these groups there may be influence of foreign powers, interested in blocking this or that concession and pushing or recommending another one. All this any moderately skillful government may guess or find out in advance. However, even the sum of all sectional interest groups together is not yet the public, though they at times seem to be the public—by virtue of the noise they make. There is a far greater majority, as yet silent, which I did not even mention: the American people at large, or the society in all its operation. The American people include members of all these various sectional groups, bent on promoting and protecting specific interests. They are not, however, only members of their groups but are individuals as well as American nationals. If their loyalties are divided, they may differ and often do differ in their opinions and attitudes from the spokesmen and appointed leaders of their group, both as individuals and as citizens, however loudly these spokesmen—labor leaders, churchmen, veterans, Daughters of the American Revolution, Association for the Prevention of World War III, and so forth—claim to speak in their name. Moreover, in all matters of foreign policy, by far the greater majority of Americans are not at all members of any group organized to protect special interests; they are free to use their own judgment if they have any. To win over these will be the aim of the government. How this could and should be done will be its main worry.

The mind of the people, however, is by no means an empty sheet of paper on which anything could be written. It is a body of habits of thinking, general judgments, fictions, inherited or acquired assumptions, principles, or whatever other name you prefer, guiding unconsciously or half-consciously the interpretation of political events and the thinking about the problems that may arise. They dominate the national discourse. With their help people rationalize their emotions; with their help sentiments will acquire some stability; in their framework new experiences and news about new facts will be pigeonholed and find a place. The success which the propagandist of sectional interest may have with the people at large, outside these interests, and the success the government will have in defending its own position and gaining assent to its new line of policy, will depend on the skill with which the public relations officer and the politician will handle this body of fictions.

Both the opposition, whether a sectional interest or a nation-wide political opposition, and the government itself—in their first step to implement the new line of policy—will meet this body of fiction, i.e., the people's way of thinking and arguing, together with the dis-

persed disposition for a variety of emotions, preferences, likes, and dislikes. They are all as yet dormant. Now I must confess that I am not able to implement my imaginary construction with concrete acts, concessions that might be made to Russia or exchanged against Russian concessions and thus indicate the concrete issues to be brought before the people in the struggle for consent. At any rate, the situation of the government will be far from enviable. The government may discover that its freedom of action is much limited; it may discover to what extent the country is already contained in its containment policy—or its proposed successor, the formula of "liberation."

The more dangerous the situation, the more foreign policy must demand priority, not only of foreign over domestic expediency but also of reason over emotion. Foreign policy is hard and exacting—it allows no concessions and tolerates no compromise. When the government, in fighting an actual or potential opposition, courts consent by appealing to popular emotions, it may easily be drawn into one of those political crimes that history never forgives. It will be able to fight a war but unable to win the peace.

The fictions I dealt with up to now were general judgments, assumptions of all kinds, rationalized sentiments inherited from former times. The situation of a government that wants to change its policy and encounters the power of these fictions in the political community is difficult enough. Yet it need not be so difficult, were it not for another kind of fiction. This is the particular fiction of our society about itself. Everybody, the government included, is obsessed with the idea of the mass character of our society. Belonging to our own age and to no other, it is our own privilege. It is perhaps the most dangerous of all our fictions, since it has a way of forcing itself into our minds in scientific garb. Once it gets hold of us, there is no release. We are its captives. Through its power all the other fictions, stereotypes, and rationalized sentiments become powerful.

There are millions, many millions. Can the millions be wrong? But are the opinions we ascribe to these millions "opinions"?—and really their opinions? Yet did not even Aristotle in his *Politics* state that the many have a better chance to be wise than the few? The many, however, of ancient political philosophy, the "hoi polloi," the demos as opposed to the aristocracy and oligarchy of birth and wealth, were relatively few; they were not only citizens but were mostly known to one another, at least by name and reputation; they did not all silently listen at the receiving end of the media of mass communication but spent the major part of the day talking politics on the market place, and were better informed about world events of their age than any member of the modern mass. Moreover, Aristotle supports his statement by the good judgment of the theater audience, whose applause decided the first, second, and third prizes to be awarded to the tragedies and comedies at the great festivals. This is a particular case, hardly justifying generalization; a well trained audience, all listeners to the play, where the plays to be performed were already chosen, the selection being in the hands of a small commission in which the opinions of a highly cultivated aristocracy were decisive, especially as they had to pay

the considerable expenses of the performances.

Be that as it may, Aristotle's authority does not and cannot excuse our drawing conclusions from the economic importance of abstract masses to their relatively greater wisdom in matters of politics. Yet some such unconscious assumption seems to be at work in the back of our minds. These fictions of our own age I mentioned are three. They are fallacies.

They are, all three, inherent and support one another in the procedure of our pollsters and polling institutes. It is understandable that everybody, newspapermen, politicians, businessmen, would like to know what public opinion on this or that issue really is. Public opinion is elusive—everybody guesses and nobody knows for sure. Some smart people evolved an allegedly scientific method to find out, and they built a prosperous business by selling their findings. I restrict myself to fallacies inherent in the procedure as such.

The first of these three fallacies stems from the indiscrimiate use of the term mass. We identify a multitude of unconnected individuals with the "people." The second stems from the totally unwarranted assumption that everybody has and can have an opinion. This is obviously not the case. People are much more modest and reasonable. Before the "education" of the public mind by the pollsters, they are naïvely aware that they cannot have an opinion without any knowledge. It is necessary for the pollsters to make the incorrect assumption and to convince their customers that the assumption is correct.

In order to justify this assumption, at least by some appearance of reality, the pollsters must use the term opinion in such a wide, vague, and diluted sense that it practically covers everything from a light and volatile sentiment of a moment to a firmly established and reasoned conviction based on knowledge of the respective matter. The answers the interviewer extracts from the more or less unwilling members of their samples are, for the greater part, uncertain preferences, feelings, and sentiments rather than opinions, and should be called so, at least in an inquiry that pretends to be scientific. The result is a percentage distribution of individual sentiments in the sample.

The sample is said to be representative of the people or of the nation at large. They are, though they may be carefully selected, isolated individuals unconnected with one another. They could be representative of the people if, and only if, the people were nothing but a multitude of isolated individuals. It is not yet anything of that sort in most cases. In election polls the question concerns preferences for candidates. Here, however, the candidates are known—their ways, attitudes, lines of policy, their good and bad qualities have been discussed widely and for a considerable time throughout the county or the nation. In this case the question of the interviewer hits the people after, not before, discussion: the interviewed person is no longer an isolated individual. He is one of the people. His opinion has passed through a certain amount of discussion and can be assumed to be representative of the community—at least to a certain extent.[13]

In the so-called issue polls, however, the procedure is a misuse of science and its prestige, to which alone the polling institutes owe their existence and prosperity. Here is one of the minor scandals of science.

Half a year after the beginning of the Marshall plan the question was asked: Do you think that the Marshall plan is a success? The majority answered "Yes." At that time even a skilled and well-informed economist could not really know. The random example had practically no knowledge. There was no discussion. It is pure romanticism to assume that the people read the newspapers. They glance at the headlines. The greater part did not even know what the Marshall plan was about.[14] They answer the question at the spur of the moment. They are pressed for an answer. The result is sold as public opinion. Yet the public is not a public and the opinion is not opinion. The public becomes a public and the opinion becomes opinion in the process of mutual response in the society in operation, not by definition of the polling institute.[15]

This is an innocuous example. There are plenty of others not so innocuous. The question has been asked in this country: Do you think that the Jews have too much influence? The results have not been published—obviously because there was a majority of "Yes." The question, as formulated, is leading; the answers are misleading. Most questions in issue polls are misleading. If the question is asked: Which three groups of the dozen groups mentioned in this list do you think have too much influence?—only a very small percentage would mention the Jews. Whether this question, too, is a leading question depends on the composition of the list.

The procedure is altogether preposterous. Its results can be harmful in occupied countries when applied by the occupying powers to find out the opinion of the "native" population. This was and is still being done in Germany. Though the pollsters could not help discovering in their own country that the answers of the colored people in the South are colored by the color of the interviewer, the Germans occasionally are asked questions formulated in American terms by interviewers in American service—and meaningless results find their way into the American press and into the mind of policy makers. As "scientific" evidence of public opinion in Germany, the results can be consciously used and misused to good or bad purposes, as arguments for reasonable or foolish measures—but the procedure has nothing at all to do with anything that deserves to be called science.[16]

There are many minor fallacies in the procedure, as actually practiced. Some are avoidable; the procedure could be improved. These I skip. The main fallacies, relevant in my context, inhere in the procedure. I pointed out two. The first is the thoughtless use of the term masses. We identify the masses with the people and think in both cases of nothing but multitudes of unconnected individuals. If, and only if, the people were nothing but a multitude, the sample could be representative of the people. In assuming that the people are such a multitude, we anticipate the atomized society of some future, which by anticipating we help to bring about. The second fallacy stems from the indiscriminate use of the term opinion as practiced by the pollsters and acquiesced in by the community at large.[17]

The two fallacies, each pernicious in itself, are joined by a third which is of scientific origin and not less pernicious.

Scientific research done in public opinion institutes and elsewhere interprets the results of issue polls taken

by pollsters. When we go through these interpretations we discover that according to these interpreters the respective opinions originate in and should be explained by emotion and interest. We will further discover that this interpretation is by no means borne out by the evidence. Some apparent support or some semblance of it comes to be because emotion and interest are undefined and are used in such a vague and wide sense that anything whatsoever is either emotion or interest. The interpreters know in advance of their interpretations that these two are the sources of every opinion. They find nothing but their own miserable psychology, which has long since discarded reason. Reason does not play a role or is not allowed to play a role in the formation of opinion.[18] Biological impulses and conditioned responses to stimuli—these are all that can be observed and verified and thus are scientifically real.

How, if this is our idea of Man, can we tell the government that it should not identify the people with the masses, opinion with sentiment, and that it should appeal to reason? Yet that is just what we must demand. It is difficult—but history has no pity.

If we ask ourselves, Under what conditions can we hope for a reasonable foreign policy? the first of these conditions would be just this: the government and the opposition and the great newspapers have to free themselves from these thinking habits of our time which I have characterized as fallacies and from the influence of those smart advisers, consultants, propagandists, experts, who in times of stress are transferred from advertising agencies to some equivalent of the OWI. Governments have to free themselves in the interest of their own ability to conceive and pursue a long range policy beyond the expediencies of the week and month. They can learn from recent history in all great countries that governments, once they appeal to the masses, to stereotypes and emotions, get caught in the nets they or their public relations men have been weaving, become dependent on products they themselves skillfully and shrewdly produced.

V

The reality of the abstract masses is a natural assumption of the salesman who sells mass production goods to consumer masses. Governments freed from, and breaking out of, the prevailing fictions, observing the life of the concrete people with common sense, will soon find out that my story about masses, crowds, herds, emotions, and propaganda is only one side of the story of the mass society of the industrial age. The reality of the real people, that is, of the society in operation, has another side, hidden by the prevailing fiction.

What is that, this other side of the reality of the real people? This question forces me into fundamental theoretical problems on which hangs a rather long and complicated tale. In the preceding sections I defined the people as distinct from abstract masses, crowds, and herds by saying that the people as people and the society as society constitute a universe of mutual though unequal response. I confess that in this sentence the three terms, universe, mutual, and response, are used in an emphatic sense, i.e., charged with connotations beyond their usual meaning in our ordinary speech. I restrict myself to clarifying briefly this emphatic sense.

The term "universe" suggests that

every group which is not merely an association to partial purposes of some utility builds a kind of world, a whole *in* which the members live and to which they feel they belong. As *amundus hominum,* the society interprets the *mundum rerum,* develops ideas of its own or a special version of ideas which is its own, and creates an atmosphere of its own. It crystallizes its interests around its ideas and its ideas around its interests, referring the one to the other. Only so do the words "in" and "belong" get a human meaning, which we feel in using them.

The word "mutual" I use in distinction from both "like" and "common." "Like" interests or opinions mean merely parallel without suggesting any interaction between the human beings who have them. "Common" means in one respect less, in another more, than "mutual." "Mutual" does not presuppose agreement or exclude disagreement. It means, however, that the members of a society are aware (to a certain extent) of one another's perspectives and ready to take them into account, at least to a certain extent, whether agreeing or disagreeing. Finally "response," the most abused of the three terms, as in the language of behaviorism, is used instead of "reaction to stimuli." It is of ancient origin, older than any recorded history. It stems from a time in which people or tribes, mistrusting each other, used to confirm their words or promises by dedicating a libation to the gods—*respondeo* in Latin, from the Greek *spendomai,* means, literally, "I in my turn dedicate this drink to the gods." A remote remnant of this origin is preserved in the queer fact that from response two adjectives are derived of different and now unconnected meaning: responsive and responsible. This might suggest even to us that only the responsiveness of responsible beings matters, and further that, strictly speaking, beings that are merely mechanisms of conditioned responses can react but not respond in the emphatic sense in which I use the term.

I hope that this short theoretical remark about the emphatic meaning which I understand is the human meaning of the terms makes it clearer why I say and can say that every society, small and large, is and becomes a society by being a universe of mutual response.

In this sense society is not a thing but an occurrence; it comes to be and ceases to be on a small scale every day. And even on a large scale it must be reborn every day if it is going to last some time as a unity. It is by virtue of the continuity of the process of mutual response and by nothing else that a people in the course of its history can be said to remain the same people and retain a mysterious identity with itself and be treated as the "same" people though everything may have changed. In this process the short memory and long expectation of the young and the long memory and short expectation of the old respond to each other, agreeing and disagreeing. Response needs to be mutual; it needs not be equal and it never is.

Of course this is not and is not intended to be a definition of the "people." It says nothing about a specific character of the people as a group distinct from other groups. It is something else. It tries to indicate that something by which a society comes to be, is, and ceases to be a society. This something is theoretically rather important and practically by no means irrelevant. The

expression "universe of mutual response" contains in itself the points of departure for infinite varieties of different societies. Social life has a dimension of intensity to which we pay presently no attention. Sociology has discarded the notion of society altogether, as void of any concrete content, and speaks only of groups; it is immersed in the search for criteria to classify the infinite diversity of groups. Of course, mutual response is not merely talking, arguing, discussing. There is a great deal of silent response going on between human beings.

Even love, spiritual and physical, enjoys and demands mutuality—care, too, is mutual though unequal. There are ways and possible meanings of "exploitation" which are not merely economical. Even exploitation understood in a wider sense can be mutual, though it may remain unequal. A society based on exploitation without mutuality has ceased to be a society before it breaks asunder and perishes. Mutual response pervades the whole life of a society as society, but though it is the cradle of language, it is not restricted to the use of words.

This term is also meant to refer the abstract meanings of our scientific terms to the human reality, in which they are concrete.[19]

After this short theoretical digression, I dismiss theory and return to the way in which opinions are formed in this society of ours.

Let us look around and observe how opinion comes to be among fairly reasonable human beings. At breakfast we read in our newspaper about an American move in foreign policy. We are startled. We have a slight feeling, pleasant or uneasy, which we cannot identify. In our commuter train to the city, a fellow we know is just reading the same piece. We ask him what he thinks. He does not know much; he has some idea but doubts whether he is right. In the office we ask a colleague whom we credit with some knowledge or judgment. We tell him what our train companion's impression had been. He gives us his tentative explanation. Millions of others do the same all over the country, more or less thoroughly, until they are somehow satisfied with the explanation received. Our first unidentifiable feeling disappears—an opinion is in the making which is no longer merely ours. Some of our ideas have entered the mind of others, some of the others' thinking has entered ours. It is a simple story to which science seems to pay little attention—though it is the origin of public as public and opinion as opinion.

Or we can observe what goes on in our neighborhood, provided our neighborhood does not have a merely local sense and means the unknown people who in a metropolis happen to have apartments in the houses in our block but is a kind of community in which people know and occasionally talk with one another. In such a neighborhood people have prestige, more or less, bestowed on them by the community. Some are supposed to know something, one about this, another about that. Their answers count even when you doubt them and feel they need checking.

It is the same simple story, observable and verifiable by everyone in every neighborhood; it is not merely an accidental fragment of the atomized society of some future.

In the society in operation, opinion is continuously being formed in millions of small groups. A searching of mind

and consciousness about the true national interest or the reasonableness of a policy line is going on beside, behind, and partially against the noisy propaganda of minority groups and sectional interests of all kinds; it is also going on apart from and against the efforts to evoke and keep alive emotions and the power of old stereotypes cherished by the people. This process takes place both spontaneously and professionally, sometimes passionately, with much disagreement and quarelling, but yet conscientiously—in awareness of the deficiency of knowledge and the dubious character of easily available information.

Of course, this process going on in millions of small circles, between friends, in occasional talks at the drugstore on Main Street, scattered throughout the country, and apparently without impact on the thinking of the nation at large may lead only to confused results. It corrects but by no means eliminates emotions and stereotype judgments and does not always succeed in making reason prevail. Emotions and stereotypes pervade this process too; there is no reason without emotion and no judgment without some general assumption, which may be at least partly fictitious—yet some of these worst stereotypes are challenged; doubt in all its various forms and a great deal of healthy suspicion creep in. Emotions are of different kinds and often contradictory; they are unreasonable and reasonable in different degrees and in different respects. Even they undergo some kind of screening in the continuous process of mutual response, as this process at least aims at a kind of understanding of the political situation and the national interest in its totality; the strongest and the most unpolitical emotions are usually tied up with a partial interest, this or that partial question, country, or action; and some of the politically unreasonable emotions may be, if not discarded, exposed to question and doubt and suspicion.

We may disregard as politically irrelevant this or that particular circle and its attempt to understand the political situation as a whole. But we cannot disregard this entire process and its impact on the formation of opinion. The results of this endless talk, here and there, do not reach the public at large. The little springs of wisdom and spots of water dry up before they can become brooks and make a river. Yet it would be a mistake to dismiss them as ineffective.

Among all these small circles are some who are professionally engaged in getting all the information available, in acquiring some knowledge, in looking at the single event, problem, controversial question and the many proposals of all kinds under the aspect of the total situation and the national interest—and the more important of these are in the editorial boards of the great newspapers, those whom I have called the heroes of the press. If we look at the press as a whole, we are bound to underestimate greatly the serious work and the continuous effort going on in some editorial boards, the conscientiousness of the searching of minds, the continuous fights, quarrels, discussions, disagreements through which a modern newspaper reaches its reasoned opinions. The great newspaper has a good deal of knowledge, of both events and their background, at its disposal which it does not always print; it has sources of information, expert opinion, to draw upon, files containing the per-

tinent material, and is more or less acquainted with the personalities, ways of thinking, attitudes, virtues, and vices of the main actors on the political scene. I am not drawing an unreal picture of the press. I do not talk about the average but only about the great newspapers, a few in each country, whose editorial boards are strong enough to remain independent from the many influences and pressures rampant in the newspaper business and to resist the interference of a biased owner or the pressure of a circulation manager bent on the widest possible sales based on headlines and dramatic news. I know all the headaches inherent in the business, which are day by day the despair of the conscientious newspaperman. The great newspaper has not only the task of informing the reader, publishing the facts, interpreting them against their background, and producing an opinion about them in an editorial—mostly overnight and in great haste—but it must also inform the public about the public, giving a selection of relevant opinion worth hearing—and this is perhaps its most difficult task. In fulfilling this task, it links the many talks in the millions of small circles to one another; in this way published opinion may finally become public opinion. Published opinion is public opinion only in the imagination of the owner.

This is what the great newspaper should do; but it is not exactly what it actually does. I think I know the shortcomings; I know the temptations of big business and its particular dynamism. I know there is much slanting of the news and even some slanting of pictures,[20] much playing up some facts and playing down other facts or at least playing "deadpan" uncomfortable news that must be printed somewhere. Do not generalize any experiences with "the world's greatest newspaper,"[21] which is a special case; do not draw inferences from the practice of a newspaper that "prints everything fit to print" but tends to drop or play "deadpan" some things that could anger the average reader and thus finally conforms half-unwittingly to some stereotypes or popular emotions. I know all that—but I know also something about the serious and conscientious discussion going on in the editorial boards, which we tend to disregard. And we should not forget—in all our anger and criticism about the press in general—the heroes of the press. Still at work, they are even today indispensable for and against the government, for both consent and dissent—they are still heroes, though not recognized as such. There is a great deal of unknown heroism within the press, in silent and tenacious fighting, with some victories and many defeats, inside this process of response in and around a modern newspaper. It is a strange heroism without glory and conspicuous deeds, modern and un-Homeric—yet it too needs courage and some moral strength, skill and endurance, though no poet sings a song about so inconspicuous a heroism.

The great press does not reach the masses. Certainly not. The great newspapers reach only a few individuals scattered over the country. Only some information and some interpretation and a little reasoned opinion reach these few, and from these few they may trickle down, here and there, a few drops, to this or that of the million circles, and spread from there to some corner or some Main Street to others—simplified, to be sure, and mixed with doubt and wonder. Some of this talk reaches even the local paper and the

speaker at the radio station, and maybe the women's clubs. Questions are asked, information is gathered. And some few of the few may even turn on the radio and listen to a commentator of their liking or whom they trust or who has the reputation of some knowledge or of balanced judgment. Thus reasoned opinions, seeping down, finally reach the masses in an indirect and roundabout way.

They actually do, much more than our usual concept of the mass society allows us to admit. The American newspaper reader is much more experienced and shrewd than we assume. He became propaganda-wise in an astonishingly short time—he knows even his parties and their ways. He has grown up in an atmosphere of suspicion of government. He can be cheated, to be sure, but ever new ways of cheating need be and are discovered to circumvent suspicion—even foreign governments are learning that.

Doubts are planted here and there, some are forgotten and some remembered.

I have observed that in the recent years of hunting communist witches it has become standard practice, even in the press, to add the two hundred million Russians, four hundred million Chinese, and one to two hundred million inhabitants of the Soviet satellite states to make the impressive multitude of seven to eight hundred million Communists aligned against the United States. This is done with good effect—the total is frightening and the addition is probably intended to awaken the people to the greatness of the danger.

Yet the eight hundred million need qualification; otherwise, it does not make sense, politically. One could find in former years in the great newspapers occasional remarks hinting, cautiously of course, at some headaches these numbers cause the Russians or even speculating about their fear of an industrialized China of four hundred million bordering Siberia. Despite the present temper of the nation, someone could speculate, even, about the interest the Russians have in a war between the United States and China in which a hundred million Chinese would be killed by bombs or starved to death to the future benefit of Russia—politically a quite reasonable speculation. In the long run China will become Russia's biggest danger. Hence it has been Russia's policy in the past to keep China weak and divided. Everyone who knows anything about Siberia and China knows why. Some basic and unalterable facts of political geography favor China, not Russia. Up to some time ago such remarks found their way into this or that group, leaving doubts in the minds of some about the naïveté of political thinking behind those additions. For thousands and thousands of miles, the Siberian railway, so far the only one connecting eastern Siberia with Russia, runs along the northern border of China through practically empty country; then, further east, it branches out, crosses the Manchurian border, and turns south again for thousands and thousands of miles. There the country is bursting with life. Everywhere people, whose number no one has ever counted, work in the fields. It is another world, as alien to the Russians as it is to us, and when China is industrialized and organized, Russia's domination of Siberia will be a thing of the past, and the few Siberians will be no match for the four hundred million hard working, enduring, modest people of China. This may mean looking

far ahead, but it is very real in the Russian mind, accustomed as it is to thinking in longer stretches of time than we do. Occasional remarks pointing to this side of the picture have become less frequent in the last two or three years and now, under the pressure of a climate in which any such opinion makes an observer, however innocent, suspect, are never heard. I frankly do not know who actually helps the cause of Russia more—those who advocate war with China or those who warn against being swept by emotion step by step into irreparable mistakes.

Since I drafted these few lines concerning China some weeks ago, the new Secretary of State has just made that addition to 800 million Communists aligned against the United States. Mr. Dulles knows more than I do about present conditions. I see no reason, however, to suppress my doubts. For my part I remain convinced that Malenkov and his successors will do just what other prudent leaders did in the past and will do in the future. The pattern is to wait for the next false move of their opponents and to hope for popular emotions to push the United States step by step toward such a move.

There are other examples for the same attitude, even of great newspapers, on other questions, where there is another side of the story and reasonable and sober arguments for doubting the wisdom of governmental policy. The other side and the arguments for it are not only played down but not even mentioned. The number of cases in which one needs to resort to the great press of foreign countries, in order to become aware of them, has increased in the last years, if I am not grossly mistaken.

I return to my argument.

The seeping down of reasoned argument, be it of the great press, of some radio commentators, or of other conscientious people, to the millions of small circles is only half of the story. The press listens, and rather attentively, indeed, to their responses, discarding some but not all of them. They are only single voices, many confused and many irrelevant; none and not even all together are the "mass" and not a single one is representative of the mass. And yet behind all these voices the listeners strain themselves to hear something much more important, though not always audible, which goes beyond this or that particular event or problem and beyond any single opinion about any single issue of the moment, though indicated in some: the temper of the nation and above all the more or less slow changes in this temper. The listeners have to be careful; these voices deceive easily. They are voices of the moment; the feelings they spring from can only be guessed at and can be very different from the feelings explicitly expressed and applied to a concrete issue. In these guesses even skilled politicians can be continuously wrong; they can be and frequently are misled into presupposing emotional dispositions, and appeal to them. These appeals, however, do not penetrate the deeper layers of the public mind and seldom survive their application to the concrete issues, which in general have many facets and have a way of showing tomorrow quite another face.

What I call here "the temper of the nation," a tentative and very dubious term, is a multi-layered entity, some deeper layers reaching down to what we usually misname the national character—a concept we work with and yet do not and cannot define—some others

being only surface emotions of the moment evoked by a recent experience, companionship in war, atrocities of the present enemy, and so on.

Hence it comes to be that the national leader or the politician or the propagandist in his service, striving for consent, appeals to emotions that do not last and must be artificially revived to defend a political line that no longer makes sense. When the results of his political mistakes become manifest, he finds himself suddenly abandoned by the same public opinion by which he tried to support and to justify his political line. Something of that kind happened several times in the history of this country—and is happening again just now. Thus the temper of the nation and its changes are a source of constant surprise to the nation itself. It is merely a disposition to sentiments and preferences for sentiments, arising from history and political experience and pervading the universe of response which constitutes the unity of the nation.

But what about public opinion and what about the masses? Public opinion remains elusive. It, too, is a multilayered entity. Its changes occur in different layers, some in deeper, some in the upper layers, some more slowly, some more quickly. Words change—where they survive, their meanings change, and this change may remain unnoticed.

Mass communication reaches only the surface. It naturally clings to yesterday's words and meanings. The masses it reaches remain abstract. The crowds into which it sometimes succeeds in changing the abstract mass are held together for only a short time by an emotion of the moment. They would have to be regimented into herds and subjected for decades to a process of so-called education based on a combined monopoly of teaching and coercion.

Real changes in public opinion occur in that process of mutual response, in which a society in reciprocal experience listens to and discusses and reports the reasoned arguments which are seeping down to the million circles, and rise from them again to those who are still able to listen and to think things through and to argue back—bent on understanding the confused issues.

In this process some reason and some reasoning mingle with emotions and stereotypes—and in this process the masses do not play any role, and most mass communication merely a minor role, and that indirectly.

Few play a role, the few who have some knowledge, who think and argue back and forth. These few are many in so large a nation, scattered over the country, mostly unknown or known only locally. They are the people on whom, in the process of response, each neighborhood and each village quite naturally bestow some prestige—their voices count, they are asked their opinion by the many, who care whether their opinion and their sentiment and their first impressions make sense or not —they are the anonymous leaders, changing all the time, standing between the many and the few. They try to make up their minds. They know something, they do some reading, they may have some experience about this or that.

They are only few. How many? I venture no estimate. One or two or three million in this country. I do not know.

In Spinoza's *Tractatus Politicus* (meant for the Netherlands), the proportion of the number of patricians to the people he proposes is one to fifty.

That would mean 3,000,000 in terms of the population of this country. But unlike Spinoza's patricians, the 3,000,000 anonymous leaders do not wear a special cloth, but run around with the minister's cloth, the barber's coat, the bartender's apron. They are not an aristocracy in any sense of the word; they are fluid and not stabilized as a class—they themselves are not even conscious of themselves as belonging to such a class. They emerge from and submerge again into the society in operation by the prestige they gain and can lose again in this process of mutual response; and they have nothing more to rely upon than their knowledge, prudence, judgment, and experience to keep their prestige in their neighborhood.

They are not an elite either, in any of the modern senses in which this term found its way into political science. They are not an elite in the sense in which in this technological age each government seems to form around itself a group of special advisers, consultants, experts in some special field, with the tendency of enthusiasts to look at the whole under the aspect of their special vocation and passion—a necessary sort of people and useful if they keep their advice within the limits of their fields. Nor are they an elite in the other sense in which modern political scientists speak of an "elite" of half-scientific policy-makers, who seem to be in the main experts in public relations, propaganda or psychological warfare.

I have no name for this aristocracy in overalls. With or without name they exist. I do not want to recommend a theory nor to advocate a system. I want to describe a side of the reality which, obsessed by the mass society, we tend to overlook in theory, though in practice every candidate in an election has a list of the people in the locality he is advised to shake hands with.

These lists made by the local party leaders are mostly overloaded with party names, people who should be rewarded by a handshake for past services. The most important ones, however, may be the independent ones, which each party tends to court.

This is not theory—it is a description of a practical political reality, of which the unscientific field worker in politics is well aware.

It may be a good idea after all not to forget the role that these anonymous leaders can and should play, and to do something for them in terms of the availability of information and knowledge—not by propaganda or by any interference in the natural process of mutual response, in which they gain and lose their prestige, but by honest and unbiased reporting, by less compliance with stereotypes and emotions, less conformity and more reasoned dissent. This is the task of the press, great and small.

VI

I shall try to pick up, if possible, some of the many loose ends of my arguments and to come to some conclusions.

One hundred twenty years ago Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his *Democracy in America*. He asked himself why the democratic system works in the United States. He gave three reasons: physical conditions, institutions, and "manners." He insisted on the manners in which Americans handle their political problems. Without them the physical conditions and the institutions, excellent as they were, could not work. Since he wrote, some changes have occurred in both physical conditions and manners.

A modern de Tocqueville, equally wise, free from bias, and detached and able to look at the political scene from some distance, might well ask himself whether the system will continue to work under today's conditions and manners. I do not know how this new de Tocqueville would answer the question. As to condition, I mention only one pertinent instance which is in everybody's mind.

Some years ago Bertrand Russell published an article in this country, obviously a warning to the American people, in which he stressed the discipline, wisdom, cool judgment that the new discoveries in physical science, those already made and those that will be made, demand from the nation, government, and citizens alike, more than ever before. It was a very serious warning. We do not know even yet how serious it may become. Russell added the comforting hope that the new science of mass psychology might protect the nation from the dangers which the discoveries of the physical sciences will bring.

I do not know whether Russell's belief in the protective potentialities of mass psychology was serious or a concession to the American reader who likes to think science will help. He is too good a scientist to trust the science of mass psychology. Looking at the political scene, I think that modern society, instead of being protected by, needs protection against, a mass psychology that specializes in techniques to manipulate the unknown masses of the mass society of the industrial age.

I concentrate on the change in manners connected with the modern techniques and methods of communication, leaving aside institutions and any help or cure that could be brought about by changes which could be hoped for by a reduction in the number of elections, for instance, or by some measures revitalizing public parliamentary debate. Though institutions play a role in the development of manners, a change in institutions does not produce a corresponding change in manners unless a great effort is extended for a considerable time.

In dealing with the engineering of consent, with abstract masses, crowds, and herds, with the rationalization of emotions, fictions, and stereotypes, I distinguished two processes of communication, both going on every day in our society and both growing naturally from the society in operation, i.e., the concrete life of the people. I recall their distinctive features briefly.

There is the process of mass communication: an audience of unknown individuals listens to the radio or is supposed to listen, reads newspapers or is supposed to. This audience is a multitude of separate and unconnected individuals, an abstract mass—consumers of information, news, opinions, stories, and entertainment, potential buyers of soaps, perfumes, and gasolines. This one-way communication is dominated, by and large, by a very definite spirit which I shall call for the moment the spirit of propaganda. The search for the largest possible audience molds the temper, mood, and content of the communication. Of course, mass communication need not and does not do this in all cases. The occasional exceptions do not matter. The nature of mass communication is as business demands it, lest it cease to be business. It is financed by the sponsor and advertiser who buys time on the radio or space in newspapers. His main interest and what he pays for is in the large audience, in the

attractiveness of a program in which he can insert his commercial, in the inoffensive character of the communication, in a certain conformity to accepted standards and sentiments which do not disturb the receptive mood of potential buyers of his wares. This is natural. The process is one-way only. The consumer cannot talk back, he is not addressed personally, and he cannot ask questions. He may, of course, stop reading or turn off the radio, but he must be quick about it.

The abstract mass, i.e., a mere multitude of listeners or readers, is apolitical. It is only a potential collectivity; to become a political factor, it must be activated. On this, later.

First, I shall characterize briefly the other process of communication. In doing this, however, I do not suggest that the two processes can be separated in each concrete instance. I do not separate; I merely distinguish. The distinction is essential and fruitful, though usually forgotten. The processes interact with and pervade each other in different ways. Not all of these ways are democratic. About this too, later.

This other process of communication is by nature two-way. People talk to someone about something. This someone is not abstract, but a person, and assumed to be a person and known to be such. The people talked to listen and respond, ask questions, doubt, and finally agree or do not agree. Arguments and something we call reasoning go back and forth; doubts are voiced and dispelled. The speaker must listen, defend his facts with some kind of apparent evidence and his reasons with some kind of apparent reason. This process as such is animated by an entirely different spirit, opposed to the spirit of propaganda. I call it, for the moment, the spirit of debate, though it means much more and is more human than debate, which suggests that each side thinks only of winning an argument. In this process people do not sell opinions, do not shout into the ears of another fellow they neither know nor care to know. They want to reach the other fellow's mind, his perspective, his reasons for differing, and they try to understand with the help of the other fellow the something about which they talk.

This process goes on, in the society in operation, day after day in millions of homes, small circles, between friends. It goes on even in the government before a decision is made. It goes on even in the mind of the conscientious news commentator, in a silent dialogue of himself with himself when he makes up his mind about the meaning of this or that piece of news. All our thinking is, according to Plato, such a dialogue.

This two-way process of communication is less noisy, pretentious, and cocksure than the other process, but it is more important, though it goes on mutely and is not always able to pierce through the noise of sales talk and overcome its impact on the emotions, on their rationalizations in stereotypes or simplified principles, which are shouted over the radio or suggested by headlines.

Both processes go on in our society. They cannot be separated. May I repeat, I distinguish, I do not separate, them. They pervade each other. Each can take on the forms and the manners of the other and appear in the other's cloak. Debate can be faked and debaters may collude according to a preconceived plan to an end agreed upon in advance. The honest results of an honest debate can be addressed over the

radio to an unknown audience. Many cases are ambiguous and cannot be characterized as either propaganda or debate, if I may use these inexact terms as abbreviations. Though we cannot be sure whether a single case belongs here or there, we can very well characterize the spirit and compare Edward R. Murrow or Elmer Davis, on the one side, with Drew Pearson or Walter Winchell, on the other, by the difference in the spirit that animates their broadcasts.

The abstract mass at the receiving end of what we call mass communication is apolitical. For political purposes it must be activated. In order to be activated politically, it must be changed into a crowd or at least imbued with a spirit approximating the crowd spirit. To this change corresponds a change in what I call the state of aggregation of a collectivity. Emotions will pass away; therefore they must be fortified and rationalized. The emotions are linked to generally accepted principles, stereotypes, and simplified judgments which serve as major premises in the reversed syllogisms of mass manipulation; of these major premises the emotions seem to be the logical consequences.

In times of crisis, of social and economic unrest, when everyone is near despair and the established government is helpless, the modern dictator and his small group of organized henchmen will finally be able to regiment the crowd into a herd and rise to power as their leader and conquer the machinery of the state, beginning with the money, the printing presses, and the radio stations. It cannot happen here. We say so. Yet it can happen anywhere in the mass society of the industrial age, wherever a democracy forgets or eliminates by terror or intimidation the two-way process of communication and wants, at any price, to be a mass democracy or imagines itself to be a mass democracy —an absurd thing that never existed and can never exist, and which exists only as a word in careless and thoughtless speech.

Any attempt to activate the abstract masses politically must resort to emotions. The appeal to emotions naturally leads to the use of stereotypes and simplified judgments. The search for the large audience demands it. In this development the one-way process of communication meets in the society in operation the other process, the two-way kind of communication. The spirit of propaganda meets the spirit of debate. Emotion meets reason. Thus, at least in a healthy and vigorous society, emotion meets a certain resistance which it tends to overcome. Despite all belief in mass psychology and the tricks of propaganda, despite all the scientific techniques of mass psychology or what are now bashfully called "the modern techniques of social control," it can, but need not, prevail. As long as it does not overcome this resistance, and the spirit corresponding to the two-way process of communication prevails, democracy is fairly safe. But only fairly.

In the ensuing struggle between the two processes of communication and their corresponding spirits, the fate of democracy will be decided. The decisive factor will be that something de Tocqueville called the manners of a nation.

Looking at the present political scene in this country from this point of view, one cannot help observing a certain change in manners which has occurred in the last decade or two, tending in a certain direction. The distinction between the two processes of communica-

tion seems to have disappeared even from our theoretical thinking about this problem. A unified, over-all concept of "communication," covering both processes, has conquered the field. The all-important human differences are blurred, despite Mead's and Cooley's brilliant beginning of an inquiry into what really happens in speech between persons communicating. The word "propaganda" seems to have a magic power over our minds, nourished, I assume, by our passion for efficient salesmanship. Education is now indoctrination; even the teaching of mathematics is treated as propaganda. Even serious scholars who ponder over the difference find none. Does not the teacher try to get the commonly accepted statement of mathematics into the child's head? By the very process in which psychology selects and grinds its so-called facts into artifacts fit for statistical treatment, reason and reasoning have been eliminated as factors of any relevance. Yet simple common sense tells us every day that education depends upon some mutual human relationship between the teacher and his pupils which should be just the opposite of propaganda if it is to be education. After all, reason, reasoning, and understanding demand a certain role, even in the most misguided type of education. Education, however, is not my concern. We foolishly exaggerate the power of propaganda and disregard its obvious limitations. In the cold war with Russia, our newspapers talk about propaganda victories lost and won in the arena of the United Nations. Most of it is nonsense.

But I still have a long way to go. I dealt with the struggle of the two processes of communication as going on within society. I now introduce the government into the picture. By government I mean the persons in power who have their hands on the vast and complex machinery of power and influence we call the state. I cannot enter into the fundamental problems of political theory, concerning the relation between the society and the state. Society is not the state; the state is not society. We are misled by the Greek word, *polis,* from which the history of civil liberty starts. The term is ambiguous. It means the political community. We mistranslate it as state. But the *polis* is not the ancestor of the modern state. Its ancestor is Egypt or Babylonia or China, vast organizations of power, of bureaucratic machinery, for flood control, taxation, defense, and other essential, or not so essential, good or bad purposes. Since the birth of the modern state, society and state have been at odds. The society or a part of it wants, must want, to control the state. The state tends to control the society, to shape and form, to reform and transform it to fit its own purposes or the purposes of those who have their hands on the machinery. These few simplifying words have no other aim than to put my scheme of the struggle of the two processes of communication in a broader context, reaching beyond the mass society of the industrial age.

Both processes belong to the life of the society. Here they pervade each other. Now I let the government, in the pursuit of its good or bad purposes, duties, real or imagined, short or long range aims of its policy, interfere in society. The government can be thought to be neutral before it interferes; it can, and sometimes must, use both processes of communication as circumstances and expediency demand. The government, however, is not the abstract state in whose name some governments pretend to act; it is really a

group of human beings, very human, who themselves are part and parcel of the society in operation.

In a democratic society where the society controls the state, the opposition interferes too. It is the would-be government of a future. Both government and opposition compete for consent. The struggle between government and opposition cuts across the struggle between the two processes of communication. Both use both. Both are tempted to override debate and the spirit of reason by propaganda and emotional appeals to the masses. Both yield to the temptation.

If I am not grossly mistaken, one could observe, during the preceding two decades of American foreign policy, cases in which the government in power, its agencies, entrusted with handling public opinion, and its voluntary and patriotic helpers silenced actual and potential dissent by appealing to popular emotions. Of course, there was a war on, and one should in no way weaken the morale by criticizing the government. This has been said in all wars in which the entire people are fighting, and by all governments. On the other side, one could observe, and can observe just now, that the opposition too, by appealing to emotion, can intimidate the government, or some governmental agencies and departments, into compliance with political measures that would help its cause. I shall give an example of each.

During World War II the American government, concentrating on military victory and postponing thinking and worrying about the peace until the future, met practically no criticism of its foreign policy. From Quebec to Potsdam criticism was absent, with the exception of some courageous voices which were ignored by public opinion or soon silenced by pressure on sponsors or newspapers organized by passionate and vocal minorities. I later asked some able and independent experts, more familiar with the American scene than I can be, how this was possible. Some told me that the American people did not really consent. They assented, meaning in this case that they did not dissent. Under the powerful emotions, all understandable, aroused by the all-out war effort, by the slogan of unconditional surrender, indignation over the savage German atrocities, demand for punishment, friendship for the hard-hit Russian companion in arms, the hope for a world without Hitlers—the general temper of the nation—no one dared dissent openly or doubt the wisdom of the leaders. The measures taken under the impact of this temper outlived the temper itself by some years.

On the other side, and more recently, we seem to live in general fear of Russia, Russian spies, Russian infiltration. People are suspected, become bad loyalty risks, even if they do not have access to "classified" information; they are alleged to be guilty by association, removed from jobs, required to take loyalty oaths—and the demand for loyalty oaths spreads over the country. For my part, I am convinced that the Russian agents are dangerous. From personal experience, I know something about Russian methods. But most of the people suspected, fired, or declared bad loyalty risks because of a relationship to former so-called subversive organizations or of criticism of Chiang Kai-shek, are not the dangerous ones. The dangerous ones take any oath and do not belong to any organization on which we can lay our hands. They are organized in secret cells and sometimes even ordered to attack others with pro-Com-

munist connections. The record of the Royal Commission on the Canadian spy case of 1945 is enlightening reading in this respect. Yet all kinds of groups compete eagerly to demand loyalty oaths.

It seems to me utterly ridiculous that the most powerful nation in the world is in the grip of fear, confesses its helplessness by demanding loyalty oaths from everyone, and develops the concept of loyalty risk—a typical police concept—on the basis of vague suspicion and denunciation. The Board of Regents of the great University of California demanded a loyalty oath from professors they did not even dare suspect of communism and discharged those who refused, for reasons of principle, to take the oath, on the ground that they had disobeyed an order of the Board of Regents. At the same time loyalty oaths were demanded in the West from employees in all kinds of private enterprise. In the big gambling casino on the California-Nevada line, called Calneva, even the girl who was employed to perform nude in an enormous glass of champagne during dinner had to take the oath, and did so without protest. Of course, she may have been a spy, used as what is called a "contact" in the language of the police. In that case, however, she would certainly have taken the oath without batting an eye. This one case, among many, found its way into the press because a nude girl taking a loyalty oath had "news value." Of course, the Board of Regents at the University of California did not act from fear of communism; they wanted to cook quite a different goose, one that had more to do with the local fight between different wings of the Republican party than with Russia. The same holds for the present campaign—its instigators, too, may be intent on cooking another goose.

Yet all this does not matter in my context. What matters is the failure of the press, including the great newspapers, for which I had so much praise, and which, in the struggle between the two processes of communication, have an all-important role to play. They alone can let sober reasoning prevail over emotion, keep doubt alive, and dissent vigorous.

Criticism was and is, it seems to me, lame. There are critical voices, but they are played down in general by the press, while the suspicions and their apparent justification are played up, especially when the skill of the instigators of the emotional campaign know how to time their news, feed the hunger of the press for "news value" or for headline stuff. I am not sure whether this is merely my own impression or a balanced judgment. Balanced judgments in such a case are difficult and remain contestable.

Yet, mere impression or balanced judgment, both during the war and now, in the face of the campaign against people who are alleged to be bad loyalty risks, even the great press has a certain tendency to conform publicly, a certain reluctance to dissent from or against emotional currents which seem to correspond for the time being to the general temper, an idea conceived in half-paralyzed minds by the fear of the masses and blinded to the reality by their own propaganda.

All depends on the question which of the two processes of communication prevails over the other, that is, the chances for reasonable political decisions, the state of aggregation, and the inner freedom of the society, its capacity for controlling the government, and the actual content of democracy.

The two examples I cited suggest that in the last two decades the one-way process slowly got the better of the two-way process, the spirit of propaganda of the spirit of debate, emotional excitement of sober reasoning. This is a change in what de Tocqueville called the manners of the nation.

The American constitution does not provide for confronting the government and the opposition in an orderly parliamentary debate. American papers do not have the habit of criticizing their competitors. A columnist's arguments, even when relevant and to the point, are not taken up or even referred to by another columnist. That need not matter; the spirit of debate and sober reasoning can be implicit and could prevail even if every voice seemed to talk to himself alone without explicit reference to other voices and tried to reach only its own listeners. It matters a great deal, however, when the entire community, or the majority of all these single voices, is subjected to the pressure of popular emotions which the government in one case, the opposition in another, succeeds in arousing by a propaganda directed at the unknown masses. When this happens, even potential dissent is intimidated into silence, criticism goes underground, everyone seems to conform, and open dissent becomes cautious, the voices low, and the language tempered and sly.

I do not know whether and to what extent this is already the situation. I do not pretend to be a competent judge of the present behavior of the press. I simply point to a danger inherent in mass communication and the spread of belief in it. There is a dynamism in mass communication; very strong forces are at work, difficult to resist, suggesting not only the use but the misuse of all its potentialities in the struggle of government for consent, in the struggle for power between government and opposition in the face of sentiments, passions, and temptations of a society in time of war, hot or cold, or in any war-like situation which strains to the utmost the moral and material resources of a nation. After all, why should a government or an opposition, in the sometimes desperate struggle for consent, not resort to sweeping the mass into understandable emotions rather than trying to win the few over to its side by sober reasoning in a complex argument in which not even all the facts can be publicly exposed?

Any government will yield to the temptation and disregard, for the sake of immediate advantage, the fetters on its actions tomorrow and its future flexibility imposed by popular demands it has itself endowed with a dangerous power.

The fate of democracy hangs on the two-way process of communication prevailing over the one-way process. For no government, confronted with a so-called public opinion whose consent depends upon popular emotions, will be able to make reasonable decisions on foreign policy; hence it is bound to make mistakes that, under present conditions, are more likely than ever before to have disastrous consequences. All governments will be tempted to win consent by outdoing the opposition in arousing popular emotions, and thus will certainly find themselves caught in nets of their own making, besides falling victims to their own propaganda and losing their sober judgment.

If propaganda and its corresponding spirit really prevailed, democracy would have become pseudo-democracy, a political system well known in Continental

Europe, though not under this name. It was introduced by Napoleon III, practiced as democracy by manipulated plebiscites, exploited by Bismarck in bringing about the Franco-German War of 1870, and later imitated by Bismarck himself in the German Empire. For reasons of foreign policy, and without believing in it, Bismarck introduced the most democratic electoral law that existed anywhere at the time, and used, or misused, it to manipulate the elections against Catholics in the so-called *Kulturkampf,* against the Liberals to put through his antisocialistic laws, overriding dissent and sober reasoning by arousing popular emotion at the appropriate time for the election whose date the government of the empire could choose within certain limits by dissolving the *Reichstag.* Similar techniques are easier today. The modern media of mass communication stand ready for what the advertising agencies call a saturation campaign. We are just beginning to have our first experiences with them and much more lies ahead.

We are obsessed by the idea of the masses. Yet the masses are not the people—the people as the society in operation, with all its group associations, multiple memberships, and divided loyalties. They go on talking and asking their friends, forming their opinions, and perhaps asking some advice from the millions of anonymous leaders in overalls on whom they themselves, in each neighborhood, have bestowed some prestige. They have a great deal of common sense. They have preferences and dispositions to sentiments; yet they realize that they cannot have opinions without knowledge. They are not the abstract masses who listen to the radio; even the abstract masses are not yet crowds, though they can become crowds. The crowds are not yet herds. They cannot be regimented into herds, not yet—not until an attack of collective fear assails the community, until what I call the universe of mutual response breaks asunder in helpless despair. Abstract masses, crowds, and herds mean states of aggregation. The people, defined as a universe of mutual response, is again another state of aggregation, different from all these.

Democracy lives and has all its strength in the vigor and intensity of the process of mutual response within which the talkers listen and the listeners talk back. Without this process, the holy word "democracy" loses its content. By virtue of the intensity of this process, a society is a society; and when this process embraces and again and again unites the nation, the nation, however large, can be a democracy despite the history of political theory in which we learn that a *polis,* i.e., a free political community governing itself, cannot consist of more than five to ten thousand citizens.

I take the liberty of concluding with a somewhat personal remark concerning the whole of my argument.

Some things I have said may have elicited in some readers uncomfortable feelings about the danger of the present situation and the future of this country. Some readers may be reluctant to admit the political unreality of the abstract masses to which we address our propaganda; some will not want to realize that our present difficulties are partly of our own making, the outgrowth of past mistakes made under the impact of emotions and fictions. If this is the case, do not believe that my arguments can be shoved aside as mere opinions of an old fashioned liberal, a humanist, or something still more obsolete, who

obviously dislikes the mass society, the media of mass communication, and the smartness of advertisers. My arguments, disturbing as they may be, are supported by the political reality, both foreign and domestic. The daily work and its worries of each single individual may suggest to many an escape into wishful thinking—confidence in the political strength of the nation, in its efficiency, skill, and superiority of production and invention, or indulgence in a kind of self-adoration of the nation which is the vice of all great modern nations and now is spreading even in this country, though it is not part of the American tradition. No such escape will help.

History, too, supports my argument —not history as we interpret the alleged universal meaning in a philosophy of history we have inherited from our spiritual past or shaped to our convenience from some experiences concerning an apparently inevitable trend of our own time, but history as it really is, according to a saying of Thucydides, proceeding not less illogically in the concatenation of events than man in his calculations. Our own technological achievements should have cured us from our easy ways of looking at history.

When Scipio Africanus looked at the burning city of Carthage, he wept; asked why, he quoted a famous line of Homer in which Hector predicts that there will be a day when the holy city of Ilion will sink down. This was not the way we felt when the bomb fell on Hiroshima, nor was it the way any Nazi general felt when looking at a bombed city, nor any American or English general—and if anyone had such a feeling, he did not express it.

History knows no pity. I have seen in a long life empires crumble, nations being defeated and yet in the last moment being saved by mistakes of the enemy, others surviving against all odds by sheer staying power and the capacity to endure. History listens to no excuses; it did not help anybody in the past and will not help anybody in a still more cruel future to point at public opinion, too powerful to resist, at mass-emotions, though natural and understandable and the offsprings of moral conviction. Pitiless history simply does not listen; it does not hear complaints and excuses after the event.

We would better think of history in terms of Goethe, who did not believe in any of the philosophies of history; in the last year of his life he put his opinion of history in the mouth of the sphinx, one of the mythical monsters appearing in the *Klassische Walpurgisnacht* in the second part of *Faust:*

Sitzen vor den Pyramiden,
Zu der Völker Hochgericht;
Überschwemmung, Krieg und Frieden—
Und verziehen kein Gesicht.[22]

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH

NOTES

1. Especially Polybius, Livius, and Sallustius, though not formulated theoretically.

2. The word is used in an emphatic sense; hence it demands a note, at least for readers that happen to be interested in the philosophical problem it conceals. It is a literal translation of a Platonic term. Plato uses the term to characterize the human situation or the state, movement, and forces of what he calls the soul. Man, being forever both knowing and ignorant, is in between knowledge and ignorance. In a myth told by Diotima to Socrates in the *Symposium,* Eros, the God of Love, is conceived by Poverty, his mother, at a festival of Aphrodite, from Plenty, and hence is both rich and poor and never only the one or the other. But despite the poetical beauty and the human richness of his mythical analysis of what happens to the soul of man in love, in between

poverty and plenty, the term has not only a mythical or poetical meaning; it has for Plato a logical meaning and aims at something which present-day philosophers call again ontology and illustrates what Plato calls dialectics. I do not want to be technical even in a note. We use the word "concrete"—we all try to reach "concreteness" even in our abstractions. Concreteness stems from the Latin *concrescere,* "to grow together." Something is "concrete" by being grown together. The fundamental structural "elements," that are "grown together" in the human reality can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated. Taken separately they have no reality. Even darkness owes to light that it is dark. Rest, in Aristotle, is the absence of movement. Only beings that could speak can keep silent. Insofar as there is such a relationship the *negatio* becomes *privatio* and claims to be part of the concrete reality. The elements of the human situation, of which the names I mentioned here are not yet the proper names, are "grown together." To isolate one and forget the others is a kind of abstraction in which our thinking misses the reality of life. For the double meaning of concrete and abstract, cf. the author's *Man, Mutable and Immutable: The Fundamental Structure of Social Life* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950), pp. 319 ff.

3. Edmund Burke, *Burke's Speeches and Letters on American Affairs* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1908), p. 8.

4. Sasonow to Robert von Mendelsohn.

5. Emil Lederer, *The State of the Masses* (New York: Norton & Co., 1944).

6. Cf. Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking Press, 1950).

7. "Ideology" though used loosely nowadays should be spared for cases in which the "ideas" have a "logos" and form, or try to form, a comprehensive system that embraces the totality in which man lives or thinks he lives, i.e., what we call our world, and surrounds it with a kind of ultimate horizon. Most modern ideologies are, or at least pretend to be, interpretations of universal history and its course. In this interpretation the present phase of its evolution or, as the case may be, of our country, nation, or race, is assumed to be entrusted with a decisive role. An ideology must claim to be universal and try to be consistent. Most of them are neither the one nor the other. Our loose usage testifies to a profound need of the modern soul.

8. The term "herd" used here should not recall the minister as spiritual shepherd of his flock. The minister takes care of the salvation of individual souls. His power is limited; his flock is not a herd.

9. Cf. Aristotle *Politics* v. ch. 11.

10. In Hitler's *Reich* the old communities did not yield so easily to Hitler's propaganda as the new ones that came into being in the course of war measures (new or transplanted industries, return of German populations uprooted in eastern Europe). The Russians transplanted racial and cultural minorities they did not trust. They were dispersed over Siberia.

11. It should be said in defense of the leaders of the mass communication industry and their political innocence that they are interested solely in the abstract masses and their size but not at all in the abstract masses becoming crowds or being organized into herds. It can be supported by substantial evidence that in regular times the bulk of political information, news, and comment is not meant to be alarming or exciting. The great news commentators of the nation give a summary of the news and a cautious and carefully balanced comment which in some cases are models of journalistic skill. They prevent rather than foster the development of the crowd spirit in the abstract masses listening from coast to coast. They appeal to reason rather than to emotion and soothe the listener's mind, especially when the news is alarming. They do a difficult job excellently and conscientiously. The mass communication industry in defense of its role in the mass society of the industrial age may point with pride at their performance. Being patriots they are more inclined to defend and explain than to question the wisdom of the general policy pursued by the government in power. When the news is alarming, they add some comforting sentences, emphasizing the strength and the resources of the nation, and they sometimes add a little flattery or indulge a little in national self-adoration, the general vice of the modern nations in times of real or apparent success. In times of stress, acute danger, or a tendency to collective fear, even their tone changes, on the average. This peaceful, soothing, and reasonable influence weakens. The sponsor abandons the too-quiet commentator, and the dynamism of the communication industry favors the opposite line; in search for the larger audience, the communication industry adjusts its tone to an assumed general temper of the nation and thus helps to activate it.

12. It is not enough to answer the question by pointing to the nationalism of the right wing parties. Of these, the agrarian conservatives, led by the famous Prussian Junkers, were not at all imperialistic and were especially against the navy. They used the demand for a German navy and other emotional issues for electoral purposes, since they feared their key position in the Prussian Diet could be threatened by a left wing majority in the German Reichstag. The very liberal electoral law in the Reichstag suggested popular national emotion as their only chance. Behind the strength of the nationalistic sentiment stand the particular dynamics of the domestic situation.

13. Ironically the election polls, with which the whole procedure started, though the only ones in which the procedure could make sense, are for several reasons the most criticized of all polls. Their predictions are made and are confronted by the results. In other polls no such check is possible. Elections are usually close. An error of few per cent and the result is wrong. The samples taken are usually very small. Larger samples, though more reliable, would be more expensive, and hence leave no profit.

14. A magazine, in 1950, criticizing the polls, reports that to a question concerning a nonexistent act of congress, 70% of the interviewed persons had an opinion. Such experiments should be repeated.

15. An "operational" definition, now admitted by many scholars as scientific, follows the model—intelligence is what the intelligence test tests. It would settle the question of public opinion by defining public opinion by the operations of polling. Insofar as the social sciences are concerned, this would be the final ruin of intelligent inquiry. Cf., about the neglect of any consideration for the nature of the object under study, Herbert Blumer, "Public Opinion and Public Opinion Polling," *American Sociological Review,* XIII, No. 5 (October 1948), 542–49.

16. The followng (end of 1952) is the last example I know. The inquiry is called "Befragung eines repräsentativ Durchschnitts der deutschen Bevölkerung." It is ordered by the reaction analyses staff of the U.S. High Commissioner, where the questionnaire is formulated and the results interpreted. The questionnaire is given to the "Divo"—*Gesellschaft für Markt und Meinungsforschung, G.M.b.H., Frankfurt am Main.* Divo is the offspring of the interview organization which, before 1951, worked directly under the American High Commissioner. The present personnel consists of American-trained Germans. The following question was asked. If you take an overall view, do the ideas of National Socialism contain more good or more bad things? The percentages of December, 1952, against May, 1951, have been 44% against 34% for more good; 39% against 40% for more bad; 17% against 26% having no opinion. This means, for the American interpreter, a rise of Nazism. For the Germans, the ideas of national socialism are not a coherent body but an incoherent mixture of very different things. They should at least be specified.

17. The report of the Committee appointed by the Social Science Research Council to inquire into the reasons of the failure of the polls in the presidential election of 1948 deplores the lack of basic research in and of reliable knowledge of what "really goes on in the interviewing process." Frederick Mosteller *et al.,* "Report to the Committee on Analyses of Pre-election Polls and Forecasts," Social Science Research Council Bulletin, No. 60 (1949), p. 13.

18. Cf. Salomon E. Asch's criticism of psychological inquiries, "Doctrine of Suggestion, Prestige and Imitation in Social Psychology," *Psychological Review,* LV (September, 1948), 250–76.

19. For an elaborate treatment of the human meaning of response and related concepts, cf. the author's book, *Man, Mutable and Immutable: The Fundamental Structure of Social Life.*

20. As television discovers and develops slowly its potential virtues as well as its vices, we shall see in the years to come more slanting of pictures. Slanting of pictures, however, is not restricted to direct falsification, i.e., pictures put together of different snapshots—like the pictures showing Senator Tydings together with a noted Communist he never met, used in the 1950 senatorial election in Maryland. It should include staged pictures, as those used by Goebbels, where the SS was shown leading nice, blond children securely through the traffic in Berlin. They did so on order for the sake of the pictures to be taken, and in the first year of Nazi rule fooled the unsuspecting public. When in an electoral campaign one presidential candidate is shown in a so-called spot propaganda, answering quickly short questons of common people he seems to have met accidentally, people do not suspect that both questions and answers could be prefabricated for the sake of television. This might be only a timid beginning, in which advertising agencies, in their enthusiasm for efficiency, transfer quite naturally old techniques of salesmanship to the electoral campaign.

21. *Chicago Tribune.*

22. "Backed by the Pyramids we score,
High court judgment of man's race;
Inundation, peace and war—
Motionless we keep our face."